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Challenges and opportunities for improving volunteer brokerage by volunteer centres

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Matchmaking in the volunteer market:

Challenges and opportunities for improving volunteer brokerage by volunteer centres

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Voor Jan-Willem van Gilst en Betty Gardien

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

Background and design

INTRODUCTION

At the start of this PhD research project in 2008, volunteer shortages were at the centre of attention. Many volunteer organizations, especially in care and welfare, experienced a shortage of volunteers. Volunteer centres played an important role as a recruitment channel for care and welfare organizations in their capacity as brokers for the volunteer market. However, their success rate was not optimal. This PhD research project investigates how result improvement can be achieved and may contribute to solving shortages. Before describing the design of the project in detail, the history of volunteer centres and the expansion of tasks of volunteer centres over time are discussed. Shortages of volunteers are also specified.

HISTORY OF DUTCH VOLUNTEER CENTRES

Volunteer centres have a tradition of almost fifty years in the Netherlands. These centres focus on stimulating, securing and supporting volunteering. Volunteering refers to work that is done unpaid and without obligation, for others or society. Volunteers and volunteer organizations are the largest client groups of volunteer centres. Volunteer organizations are organizations where volunteers work. There are three types of volunteer organizations:

1. those that work with professionals and where volunteers carry out supportive work;
2. those which rely (almost) entirely on volunteers;
3. those that are run by volunteers but where there are no other volunteers, such as foundations/funds boards.

Volunteer centres mainly work within their local areas. However, there are volunteer centres that also operate regionally and sometimes provincially. Municipalities and national interest groups are important cooperation partners (MOGroep, 2013; Ploegmakers et al., 2011; Rijksoverheid, 2020; Stubbe & van Dijk, 2006; Zuidam & Bouwmeester, 2004).

The first two volunteer centres in the Netherlands were founded in 1972 in Arnhem and Tilburg as part of a government experiment (van den Bos, 2006). With this experiment, the Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Social Work [CRM] wanted to increase volunteering participation. The design of volunteering at that time no longer fit with the wishes of potential volunteers. Young people, especially, seemed to be deterred by the organized nature of volunteering. There was also fragmentation and working at cross purposes. More cooperation, coordination and consultation was desirable. It was expected that volunteer centres could play an important role in this. In 1977 the experiment came to a positive conclusion. The "Grant Scheme for Volunteer Centres" (1977-1986) was set up to encourage the foundation of new volunteer centres. This scheme reimbursed 50% of the operating costs. About sixty

municipalities set up a centre, with the four major cities leading the way (van den Bos, 2006; van de Wetering, 2011).

Since then, many volunteer centres have been established. There was an explosive growth of 40% in five years at the beginning of the century. While the Netherlands had 160 volunteer centres in 2001, in 2006 this number had risen to 222. An important driving force for this growth was the International Year of Volunteers in 2001. Attention was drawn worldwide to the importance of volunteering. In the Netherlands, this has resulted in, among other things, the Temporary Incentive Scheme for Volunteering [TSV] from the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports [VWS] and the establishment of the Volunteering Policy Committee (Commissie Vrijwilligersbeleid, 2001; Stubbe & van Dijk, 2006).

The TSV consisted of a temporary arrangement for the period from 2001 to 2004, with an extension until the end of 2005, for ongoing projects. On the basis of the TSV, municipalities and provinces were able to apply for benefits for activities aimed at strengthening volunteering. For the implementation of the scheme, an annual amount of €11.34 million euros (25 million guilders) was made available by the government. The participants were expected to double the contribution of the central government. This brought the total investment to €22.68 million (50 million guilders). Many of the funds made available have been used to establish and expand volunteer centres (Commissie Vrijwilligersbeleid, 2005; Vliegenthart, 2001; VWS, 2001).

The Volunteering Policy Committee was active from mid-2001 to early 2005. The committee was led by a former member of parliament, Louise Groenman, and consisted of practical experts and local and provincial administrators. The aim of the committee was: “To further develop and renew the volunteering policy of municipalities and provinces” (Commissie Vrijwilligersbeleid, 2005, p. 9). The Volunteering Policy Committee has proved to be an important advocate for volunteer centres. In committee publications, extensive attention was paid to the role and importance of volunteer centres. In the final report of the committee, they recommended to give each municipality its own volunteer centre: “The challenge must be that every municipality ... has an appropriate professional support structure for local volunteering. Municipalities that support good quality volunteering support must have a professional volunteer centre” (Commissie Vrijwilligersbeleid, 2005, p. 37).

The termination of the TSV temporarily led to great uncertainty for many (newly established) volunteer centres. As a result of the abolition of this subsidy scheme and government cutbacks, the implementation of local volunteering policy and thus the continued existence of volunteer centres came under pressure. However, with the introduction of the Social Support Act [Wmo] in 2007, the tide was turned. Municipalities became responsible for the implementation of

the Social Support Act. The aim of the Social Support Act is to allow people to function independently in society for as long as possible. The sense of individual responsibility and commitment is stimulated within citizens and (volunteer) organizations. Within the Social Support Act, nine performance areas are distinguished, where the fourth performance area explicitly focuses on supporting volunteers (and informal carers). Volunteer centres became an important partner for municipalities in shaping this local support (Bouwmeester & Zuidam, 2004; van Houten et al., 2008; Kolner & Duijvestein, 2007; Movisie, 2007; Schalk, 2006).

In the subsequent years, the number of volunteer centres continued to grow. Research carried out by Movisie (Terpstra et al., 2008; Ploegmakers et al., 2011) shows that the Netherlands had 238 volunteer centres in 2008. In 2011, this number had risen to 241. More recent data is missing. An indication of the current state can be found on the website of the Association of Dutch Volunteer Organizations [NOV], the national interest group for volunteering. Consultation of this website makes it clear that for 2020, they are aware of 187 volunteer centres (NOV, 2020).

EXPANSION OF TASKS OF VOLUNTEER CENTRES

The range of tasks of volunteer centres has expanded considerably over time with volunteer brokerage continuing to play an important role.

In their early years, volunteer centres were mainly concerned with volunteer brokerage or bringing together supply and demand in the volunteer market (van den Bos, 2006, Stubbe & van Dijk, 2006, van de Wetering, 2011). Furthermore, secondary activities related to this main task were carried out, such as "information, consultation and coordination, coaching, research and action, advice and service" (van den Bos, 2006, p. 9).

In the following years, the so-called secondary activities from the initial period developed into independent tasks. In the 1998 Handbook on Quality Management for volunteer centres, Heinsius (1998) distinguished six tasks. These are:

1. brokerage: bringing together the demand for and supply of volunteering;
2. promotion: giving publicity to and appreciation for volunteering;
3. advocacy: representing the interests of volunteers and volunteering;
4. information and advice: informing and advising on volunteering and related areas (policy, legal position, etc.);
5. increasing expertise: increasing the volunteers' expertise in order to enhance their performance in their voluntary work;
6. development: developing and implementing relevant new activities and projects.

More than a decade later, in 2010, this range of tasks[1] has considerably expanded in line with social and legal developments in the Netherlands (Ploegmakers et al., 2011). In addition to the six basic tasks, volunteer centres were also strongly involved in: social internships (88% of the volunteer centres), corporate social responsibility (73%) and social activation or reintegration (48%).

Social internships are a form of extracurricular learning, in which secondary school students spend some of their class hours becoming acquainted with and making an unpaid contribution to society. From September 2011 to January 2015, the social internship was made compulsory by the government. The government provided financial support to volunteer centres, through the municipalities, in order to appoint special brokers to mediate in social internships. From 2015 onwards, social internships have taken place on a voluntary basis (Bijsterveldt-Vliegenthart, 2007; Movisie, 2020; Ross-van Dorp, 2005; VWS et al., 2008). Corporate social responsibility [MBO] involves the voluntary deployment of money, people, resources and expertise by a company for the local community. It fits in with the idea that companies can contribute to social prosperity in the longer term. The Dutch government stimulates corporate social responsibility. The implementation of corporate social responsibility is made possible by a national network of intermediaries. These intermediaries can be part of a volunteer centre (Andries & Lap, 2010; Ploumen & Kamp, 2013). Social activation is part of the Comprehensive approach [Sluitende aanpak] introduced by the government in 1999. This approach focuses on the aim to offer all (new) unemployed adults a job or trajectory within 12 months (Kok et al., 2004). Social activation is defined as "increasing social participation and breaking through social isolation by undertaking socially meaningful activities, which may be the first step towards paid work" (van der Pennen, 2003, p. 10). It is mainly aimed at people who are at a great distance from the labour market, so-called phase 4 clients. Volunteering can be used as a stepping stone to paid work and volunteer centres can mediate this (Eyra, 2011; van der Pennen, 2003).

Furthermore, many volunteer centres (45%) also provided facilities such as (working) spaces or appliances. 20% of the volunteer centres facilitated support centres for informal care. These centres offer personal help and support to the informal caregiver (Veenstra et al., 2016). Less common tasks (25%) concerned NLdoes [NLdoet], a national campaign for recruiting volunteers, supporting volunteer organizations and regional consultations. Brokerage, information and advice (100%) were the most frequently performed tasks by volunteer centres. Many volunteer centres even derived their right to exist from the brokerage task, according to the survey of Ploegmakers et al. (2011).

Three successive studies by Movisie, conducted among volunteer centres in 2005, 2007 and 2010, show that the average number of mediations by volunteer centres has increased considerably between 2005 and 2010. In 2005, the average was 21.7 online mediations and 17.1 offline mediations per month (Stubbe & van Dijk, 2006); in 2007, the average was 33.3

online mediations and 32.9 offline mediations per month (Terpstra et al., 2008); and in 2010, the average was 86.0 online mediations and 45.0 offline mediations per month (Ploegmakers et al., 2011). 46% of online mediations were successful in 2005, 58% in 2007, and 37% in 2010. For offline mediations, 57% were successful in 2005, 70% in 2007 and 50% in 2010. Here, "successful" is defined as: "a completed job or placement of at least 3 months" (Terpstra et al., 2008, p. 11).

Since 2011, no large-scale survey has been conducted into the work of volunteer centres in the Netherlands. However, a 2018 study (van de Gast et al., 2018) on municipal volunteering policy shows that, in recent years, larger volunteer centres in particular have increasingly profiled themselves as local centres of expertise for volunteering and, as such, act as sparring partners for municipalities. It has also been reported that current volunteer centres (can) play a role in the integration of refugees, neighbourhood social teams, and helping people on social assistance benefits who have to do unpaid work as compensation (de Gruijter and Razenberg, 2017; van Hinsberg, 2016; Timmermann et al., 2014; Redeker et al., 2017). They can also become involved in the implementation of the social service [MDT]. MDT is a government action programme launched on 1st February 2020. Under MDT, secondary school students are encouraged to volunteer for up to 18 months (Alkemade, 2019).

SHORTAGE OF VOLUNTEERS

During the period that this PhD research project was started, several major studies from that time focused on the shortage of volunteers.

Zuidam and Bouwmeester (2004) paid attention to volunteer shortages in the context of a study regarding the state of affairs of volunteering policy in the Netherlands. The study included, in addition to an internet survey among all Dutch municipalities, 9 group discussions with 62 volunteer organizations. Many volunteer organizations indicated that they were short of volunteers. In particular, there was a need for board volunteers and expert volunteers for specific tasks. The shortages were firstly attributed to social developments such as an increase in the number of double-income households with less free time available, an expansion of leisure time choices and a change in mentality among people who would rather choose to do something for themselves rather than for society and prefer a variable use of free time to a fixed use. Secondly, cuts in paid employees and budgets were mentioned. Finally, a link was made with increasing government regulations resulting in stricter requirements for volunteers.

Devilee (2005) gives a more detailed specification of the shortages in his study on volunteer availability and volunteer policy at various organizations. He found that 38% of volunteer organizations were short of volunteers. This percentage is based on data from 1400 volunteer organizations from 10 municipalities. These data has been collected with the Local Volunteering Monitor, a tool municipalities can use to gain insight into local volunteering. Care and support organizations (45%) experience the strongest shortage of volunteers, followed by organizations in the field of socio-cultural work (43%) and philosophical organizations (43%). Shortages mainly concerned board positions and positions where specific skills were required. Devilee (2005) relates the shortages to an increasing demand for volunteers, higher demands from the public and stricter laws and regulations.

In a study by Plemper et al. (2006), the above results are further nuanced for the care sector. The data was collected through surveys, focus groups and document research from 12 volunteer organizations and their volunteers in the care sector. It turned out that 15% of the volunteer organizations in the care sector had to deal with a decreasing number of volunteers. In addition, two-thirds of the organizations needed more volunteers to meet the demand for care. In 18% of the care organizations, the shortage was so great that certain activities could not be carried out. This particularly applied to activities like making visits/keeping company, management tasks and transport. Deployment during evenings/nights and weekends and ageing played a role here.

A focus on the sports sector was given by the study of van der Klein et al. (2010). They conducted a digital survey among professional and volunteer organizations in the field of sports, welfare and care. 700 organizations participated in the survey, of which 415 were from the sports sector. It turned out that 48% of the respondents in the sports sector experienced a shortage. The shortages were felt in areas such as governance and management, coordination and organization and occasionally in PR, communication and sponsoring. No specific causes for the shortages were mentioned. However, it was explicitly stated that there was no relationship with the retention of volunteers.

The studies mentioned above propose various solutions to address the shortages of volunteers. These solutions consist of three tracks.
Recruiting new volunteers is the first, popular track (Devilee, 2005; van der Klein, 2010; Plemper et al., 2006). Volunteer organizations mainly use their own networks, websites, local media, flyers, leaflets, fairs/events, and volunteer centres for recruiting new volunteers. Research by Dekker et al. (2008) showed that 24% of volunteer organizations make use of the services of a volunteer centre when recruiting. This mainly concerns care and welfare organizations. Within this group, the use of volunteer centres is 31% and increases up to 84% for organizations affiliated with Mezzo (Plemper et al., 2006). Later research from 2010

mentions percentages of 65% for welfare organizations and 41% for care organizations (van der Klein, 2010).
The second track concerns the binding of already active volunteers (Devilee, 2005; van der Klein, 2010; Plemper, 2006). This can take many forms such as offering guidance, training, appreciation and financial compensation or organizing a party or day out.
Looking for alternatives to working with volunteers is the last track (Devilee, 2005; Plemper, 2006). As alternatives, professionals are employed or people may be forced "to volunteer" in the context of social activation or retaining membership of a (sporting) club. A final option is to stop certain activities.

Despite a wide range of possible solutions, the volunteer shortages have not been resolved over the years. Volunteer organizations still have to deal with this problem today, according to recent studies by Mezzo (2016) and Grootegoed et al. (2018).
Mezzo is the national association for informal carers and volunteer care. By means of a digital survey among the 328 member organizations, Mezzo has investigated which bottlenecks volunteer care organizations have encountered since the various decentralizations in healthcare since 2015. In 2015 the new Social Support Act 2015 [Wmo 2015] and the Long-term Care Act [Wlz] were introduced. 43% of the organizations surveyed indicated a structural shortage of volunteers, while 29% experienced an occasional shortage at certain times of the year. There is a particular need for young volunteers (69%), volunteers with practical knowledge (59%) and male volunteers (55%). The shortages are viewed in the light of, on the one hand, an increase in the number and complexity of support requests since 2015 and, on the other hand, a decrease in financial resources. To maintain the number of volunteers required, recruitment campaigns are held by Mezzo's member organizations.

Grootegoed et al. (2018) studied the increasing demand for volunteers under the influence of the decentralisation of care in 2015 and how this affects volunteer organizations and volunteers already working for them. They did this by means of surveys and discussions in expert panels among managers, coordinators and volunteers of 14 volunteer organizations working in the local social domain[2]. The study showed that volunteer organizations are often faced with more complex requests for help and a higher prevalence of new, complex problems such as dementia, multi-problem families, and debt assistance. The questioned volunteer organizations experience this as (too) heavy. They also have difficulty meeting the requests for help. This is mainly due to a lack of (volunteer) manpower. Organizations have difficulty finding new volunteers. The impression is that people generally have, and make, less time available for volunteering and are less likely to commit to an organization. Volunteering has to compete with paid work, other leisure activities or informal caring tasks. In addition, already active volunteers sometimes drop out prematurely due to a lack of time, but also because they are overburdened by the strain and increase of work. This definitely

applies to 10% of the volunteers who left. Partly because of this, extra efforts have been made to recruit new volunteers in addition to the retention of volunteers, increasing expertise, setting boundaries and risk management among volunteers.

It is striking that, for a long time, the shortages of volunteers were not found to be associated with a decrease in their number. In fact, their number remained stable until the first signs of a decline were noted in 2015. The VU Amsterdam spoke of a gradually decreasing trend in the number of volunteers in its biennial research project Giving in the Netherlands [GiN] (Bekkers et al., 2015). The estimates for 2010, 2012, 2014 and 2016 were 41%, 38%, 37% and 36%, respectively. The average number of hours that people spend on volunteering per month was also decreasing, from 19 hours in 2010 to 14.5 hours in 2016. Bekkers et al. (2015) attributed the decrease to the increasing demand made by the government on citizens to provide informal support in their immediate surroundings. This was at the expense of volunteering. More recently, Grootegoed (2018) has also suggested that informal care acts as a competitor for volunteering.
The trend observed by Bekkers et al. (2015) is not yet visible in other important national studies by the Netherlands Institute for Social Research [SCP] and Statistics Netherlands [CBS]. According to the SCP (van Houwelingen & Dekker, 2018), the number of volunteers over the past 10 years has fluctuated between 25-30%. CBS (Arends & Schmeets, 2018), states a percentage of 49% for the number of volunteers for the period 2012-2016. Both the SCP (Kuyper et al., 2019) and CBS (Hetem, 2020) have observed a fairly stable picture in terms of hours volunteered.

AIM AND DESIGN OF THIS THESIS

Substantial shortages in the volunteer market, which still exist today, were the reason for starting the PhD research project reported in this thesis. Care and welfare organizations in particular experienced shortages of volunteers. Because of the shortages it was often impossible for these organizations to carry out certain activities.
At the start of the project at the end of 2008, recruitment was a popular way to tackle shortages. Volunteer centres played an important role as a recruitment channel for care and welfare organizations in their capacity as brokers for the volunteer market. However, the success rate was variable and not optimal.
The expectation was that there was room for improvement by optimizing the brokerage process. This expectation was based on the growing recognition of the importance of motivation in volunteering (see Devilee, 2005) and on the lack of (structural) attention to this in the practice of volunteer brokerage. An insight into the practice of volunteer brokerage was obtained through personal involvement in a small volunteer centre in the province of South Holland. At that time, scientific research into the way in which volunteer centres fulfilled their role as brokers was lacking. Only guidelines (Heinsius, 1998; Heinsius, 2000) for the implementation of brokerage were available. These guidelines came from the Association of Dutch Volunteer Organizations [NOV], the national interest group for volunteering. However, these guidelines were quite dated and did not address motivations for volunteering. It was also unclear to what extent these guidelines were actually followed in practice.

The aim of the research project was to gain insight into the implementation of volunteer brokerage by volunteer centres, and the way in which better results could be achieved. With regards to this aim, two research questions and sub-questions were defined:

1. How is volunteer brokerage organized in the Netherlands and which part do volunteer centres play as volunteer brokers?
2. How can recognised success factors for volunteer brokerage be used in practice by volunteer centres?
    a. Which factors contribute to the success of volunteer brokerage?
    b. How does volunteer brokerage offered by volunteer centres occur in practice?
    c. When and how can success factors for matching volunteers and organizations be incorporated in the practice of volunteer brokerage offered by volunteer centres?

Research question 3 was added at a later stage because of the increasing use of online brokerage due to the progressive digitization of society, as became apparent when answering the first two research questions. This brought the usability of websites into focus as a co-determining factor for the success of volunteer brokerage. Research question 4 was also added later. Due

to unexpected informal care obligations on the part of the researcher, answering research questions 1 and 2 took much longer than expected and sometimes even had to be halted for some time. Therefore, it was considered useful to place previous research findings in a broader (time) perspective and to look at the current and future status of volunteer centres as brokers. Research questions 3 and 4 were formulated as follows:

3. How can the usability of volunteer brokerage websites of volunteer centres be studied and what kind of information does this provide?
4. What developments have influenced the brokerage role of volunteer centres in the past 10 years and what does this mean for the future of volunteer centres as volunteer brokers?

The research questions were answered in three phases. Phase I included a literature search and field research, focusing on answering research questions 1 and 2. In Phase II, research question 3 was answered by means of a literature search and user testing. In Phase III, an answer was given to research question 4. A literature search and expert interviews were used for this. See Table 1 for more detailed information about the different research phases and methods applied.

Table 1: Research phases, methods and questions

Research phase	Research method	Research question
I (2008-2015)	**Literature search** **Field research:** – survey among 38 volunteer centres in South Holland (response = 74%) – semi structured interviews with 8 volunteer centres, 9 volunteer organizations using volunteer centres to recruit volunteers, and 8 volunteers recruited via a volunteer centre – desk research of documents collected during the interviews	1, 2a, 2b, 2c
II (2016-2018)	**Literature search** **User testing:** 5 websites of 5 volunteer centres were tested by 5 testers per website	3
III (2019)	**Literature search** **Expert interviews:** open interviews with 9 experts from various fields and organizations	4

OUTLINE OF THIS THESIS

This thesis is structured as follows.
Chapter 2 discusses the role of volunteer centres as volunteer brokers and identifies factors contributing to the success of volunteer brokerage (research questions 1 and 2a).
Chapter 3 deals with the practice of volunteer brokerage by volunteer centres and the implementation of the identified success factors (research questions 2b and 2c).
Chapter 4 elaborates on the use and assessment of volunteer's motivations to improve the results of offline and online volunteer brokerage (research questions 2a and 2c).
Chapter 5 describes a commonly used method to study usability of websites and its application to websites of volunteer centres (research question 3).
Chapter 6 reviews the developments in the past decade that have influenced the practice of volunteer brokerage by volunteer centres and examines what this means for the future direction of volunteer centres as brokers (research question 4).
Chapter 7, finally, summarises and reflects on the main findings of the research project. Limitations and future implications for practice and research are also discussed. A brief general conclusion concludes the chapter.

Notes

1. Since 2009, these tasks have been attributed to 5 basic functions that have been drawn up by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport [VWS], the Association of Dutch Municipalities [VNG] and the umbrella organizations for informal care and volunteering, Mezzo and NOV. These functions include: translating social developments, connecting and brokering, strengthening, spreading and changing. Terpstra, M., Merkus, M. & Scherpenzeel, R. (2014). *Het hart van de transformatie. De gemeentelijke blik op vrijwilligerswerk en mantelzorg* [The heart of the transformation. The municipal view of volunteering and informal care]. Utrecht: Movisie.
2. The social domain relates to "everything that local authorities do in the field of work, care and youth in accordance with the demarcation in the Participation Act (work), the Social Support Act 2015 (support) and the Youth Act (youth)". Pommer, E. & Boelhouwer, J. (eds.) (2016). *Overall rapportage sociaal domein 2015. Rondom de transitie* [Overall report social domain 2015. All around the transition]. Den Haag: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, p. 10.

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CHAPTER 2

Volunteer brokerage in the Netherlands

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ABSTRACT

The Dutch volunteer market can be characterized as tight. Many volunteer-involving organizations, particularly in the healthcare sector, face a shortage of volunteers. Volunteer brokerage is one (of many) options to find new volunteers. This chapter describes, based on a literature review, what volunteer brokerage means, by whom or where it is offered and the importance it has as a recruitment channel. Proven success factors for volunteer brokerage and the potential impact of volunteer brokerage on the preservation of volunteers are explicitly addressed.

INTRODUCTION

Volunteers are of great value to our society. With the introduction of the Social Support Act [Wmo], this importance is emphasized once again. After all, volunteers have been given a major role in the Social Support Act. Many organizations, especially in the non-profit sector, depend to a greater or lesser extent on the commitment of volunteers to provide a good service. These organizations are increasingly confronted with a shortage of volunteers. This shortage is, on the one hand, caused by an increasing demand, whilst on the other hand, there is a changing supply of volunteers. Organizations are trying to recruit (new) volunteers in various ways. Volunteer brokerage is one of these possible recruitment channels.

This chapter reflects on the way in which volunteer brokerage is implemented in the Netherlands and what value volunteer brokerage has and can have for the volunteer market. The basis for this reflection is a literature study, which was carried out as part of PhD research on the role of volunteer centres in bringing together supply and demand on the volunteer market (van Gilst et al., 2009). The chapter is structured as follows. First of all, the Dutch volunteer market and the current market situation are described. Next, the process of volunteer brokerage is discussed. Extensive attention is given to the parties that operate as volunteers on the Dutch volunteer market. A distinction is made between internal and external volunteer brokers. The use of volunteer brokerage by organizations and volunteers is also examined. Hereafter, the possibilities offered by volunteer brokerage to positively influence both the recruitment and retention of volunteers will be discussed. Finally, a discussion and conclusions are presented.

THE DUTCH VOLUNTEER MARKET

The volunteer market encompasses the whole range of supply and demand for voluntary action. Voluntary action refers to "all the different ways in which citizens (together) carry out unpaid activities for others" (Ross-van Dorp, 2005, p. 2). It can refer to traditional volunteering in the sense of "work carried out in any organized context, free of duty and unpaid, for the benefit of other people or society, without the person doing it for a living" (Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport, 2001, p. 1). However, it also concerns newer forms that do not meet the classical definition of volunteering on all components. Examples are social activation, social internship and employee volunteering (Klein Hegeman & Kuperus, 2003).

The demand for volunteering comes from volunteer organizations. These are organizations where volunteers work. This may involve organizations that work with professionals, where

volunteers do supportive work. Organizations that rely (almost) entirely on volunteers are also included, as well as organizations that are solely run by volunteers such as boards of foundations and funds (Zuidam & Bouwmeester, 2004). Volunteer organizations vary widely in size and level of operation. On the one hand, there are large national umbrella organizations with provincial and/or local branches. These organizations are often linked to certain types of work or sectors. On the other hand, there are numerous small(er) organizations that work with volunteers at a local and/or regional level. These include institutions such as nursing and care homes, but also small-scale citizens' initiatives such as action groups, self-help groups and community projects (Commissie Vrijwilligersbeleid, 2001). There are no figures into the exact number of volunteer organizations in the Netherlands. However, the number of national umbrella organizations of volunteer organizations was estimated by the Volunteer Policy Committee (Commissie Vrijwilligersbeleid, 2001) at between 50 and 60. According to research by Regioplan Beleidsonderzoek (Dekker, Mevissen & Stouten, 2008), most volunteer organizations work on a non-profit or not-for-profit basis. They are active in all types of social sectors, such as sports and recreation, care or assistance, philosophy of life, culture, socio-cultural work, and education, training and advocacy. In particular, the importance of volunteer organizations in the care sector has increased considerably in recent years as a result of the increasing ageing of the population and the introduction of the Social Support Act. More than ever before, the support of vulnerable citizens is called upon by their own social environment. Organizations that provide voluntary external care play an important role here (Plemper, Scholten, Oudenampsen, van Overbeek, Dekker & Visser, 2006; Devilee, 2008; Braam, Leusink & Witteveen, 2010).

The supply of volunteers comes from individuals who want to volunteer. There are many of them, according to recent figures from the ongoing research project Giving in the Netherlands [GiN] 2009 (Bekkers & Boezeman, 2009). In 2008, 45% of the Dutch population worked as a volunteer. Statistics Netherlands [CBS] (van Herten, 2008) found an almost equal percentage (44%) for 2007 in the Periodic Life Situation Survey [POLS*J*. Older people, in particular, are increasingly active as volunteers. In the five-yearly Time Use Survey [TBO] (van Ingen, 2011), it was found that participation in voluntary work by Dutch people aged 65 and older increased from 27% in 2000 to 32% in 2005. Meanwhile, the percentage of volunteers in the age groups 25-44 years and 45-64 years decreased, according to Statistics Netherlands (Otten, 2005). Contrary to the elderly, there is no clear trend for young people aged 18-24 to participate in volunteering. Participation rates have fluctuated in recent years. However, this is not the case for younger students[1] (12-19 years). In this group there has been a relatively sharp decline over recent years (van Ingen, 2011). The participation rate decreased from 23% in 1995 to 18% in 2000 and 17% in 2005. It is possible that this will rise again due to the introduction of the social internship.

Despite the wide range of volunteers on offer, 38% of volunteer organizations are struggling with a shortage of volunteers (Devilee, 2005). This percentage is based on an analysis of data from 1400 volunteer organizations from 10 municipalities. The data has been collected with the Monitor Local Volunteering of CIVIQ[2], an instrument for developing municipal volunteering policies. Care and support organizations experience the most severe shortage (47%) of volunteers followed by socio-cultural work organizations (43%) and philosophical organizations (43%). As far as care is concerned, it is possible to disseminate Devilee's findings further. Research (Plemper et al., 2006) has been carried out by the Verwey-Jonker Institute and the Dutch Institute for Care and Welfare (NIZW) into the state of volunteers and volunteer organizations in care. This showed that two-thirds of volunteer organizations in the care sector need more volunteers to meet the demand for care. In 18% of the organizations, the shortage is so great that certain tasks cannot be carried out. This mainly concerns activities such as: visits and companionship, administrative work and providing transport.

According to Devilee (2005), the reason for these shortages is that the demand for volunteers has increased. This is due to higher demands of the public and stricter legislation and regulations by the government. Yet a changing deployment of volunteers also plays a role. A new type of volunteer, the so-called "flash volunteer" is emerging. In contrast to the traditional, structural volunteer, this volunteer can only be deployed for one specific project and for a limited period of time (van der Klein & Oudenampsen, 2010). The results of Giving in the Netherlands 2009 (Bekkers & Boezeman, 2009) also point in this direction. It appears that more and more volunteers limit themselves to one task. In 2008 this was the case for 49% of the volunteers, but for only 27% in 2002. According to Bekkers and Boezeman (2009, p. 91) volunteers are: "... fewer and fewer all-rounders. They are increasingly specialists, focusing on a single task within the organizations in which they are active". As a result, more volunteers are needed than in the past. Volunteer organizations have a somewhat different view on this, as evidenced by an exploratory study by Regioplan Beleidsonderzoek (Dekker et al., 2008) into the demand side of voluntary action. They cite as the most important causes the lack of sense and time for people to volunteer, an outflow of older volunteers and an insufficient inflow of young people to compensate for this, and fishing in the same pond (of volunteers) by too many organizations.

VOLUNTEER BROKERAGE

Volunteer brokerage can offer a solution for organizations to reduce shortages in their volunteer workforce. In a general sense, volunteer brokerage refers to "intervening to reach an agreement" (van der Boon & Geeraets, 2005). In the specific case of volunteer brokerage, it is about creating an agreement between volunteers and volunteer organizations

or “bringing together supply and demand in volunteering” (Stubbe & van Dijk, 2006, p. 11). The agreement covers, among other things, work to be performed, working hours, probationary period, insurance, reimbursement of expenses and complaints. It is customary to set this down in a written contract. As with all other contracts, this contract is also legally valid (Kannekens, 2006).

Volunteer brokerage involves a process, in which various phases can be distinguished:

- Application – A start is made with a demand (internal or external) from volunteer organizations for volunteers or with an offer (internal or external) from people willing to volunteer.
- Intake – Relevant information about the vacancy or volunteer is then collected and the corresponding wishes/requirements package. Based on the collected information, recruitment and selection criteria are formulated.
- Recruitment – These criteria are used to search for suitable candidates or vacancies. For this purpose, volunteer pools, talent banks or volunteer vacancy lists are consulted. If desired, external recruitment is also possible.
- Selection – Potential volunteers or suitable vacancies are then selected. This is often done in stages. First, a broad selection is made, leaving (ideally) a few volunteers or vacancies. Then, based on selection interviews, a final choice is made for one specific volunteer or vacancy. This is usually done by the requesting organization or the seeking volunteer themselves, possibly in consultation with the (external) volunteer brokerage service.
- Coordination and start – If a match has been made, definitive coordination will take place regarding work, working hours, remuneration and suchlike. The agreements made will be laid down in a volunteer contract. In general, the volunteer organization arranges this themselves and, in the case of external volunteer brokerage, the volunteer broker has, at most, an advisory role. Subsequently, the volunteer can start working for the organization.
- Follow-up – Sometime after the vacancy has been filled or placement of the volunteer made, a follow-up takes place, in which it is checked whether the volunteer brokerage has produced the intended result. If the result is unsatisfactory, the process may be repeated (in whole or in part).

The intake, recruitment and selection phases are together also referred to as matching. Here the actual link between a vacancy and a volunteer takes place (Heinsius, 1998; Lumanauw-van Ommen & van der Stadt, 1998; Scala, 2005). The volunteer brokerage process can be digitized to a greater or lesser extent. This is particularly the case with external volunteer brokers. They often work with digital systems to support matching, database management and information provision.

VOLUNTEER BROKERS

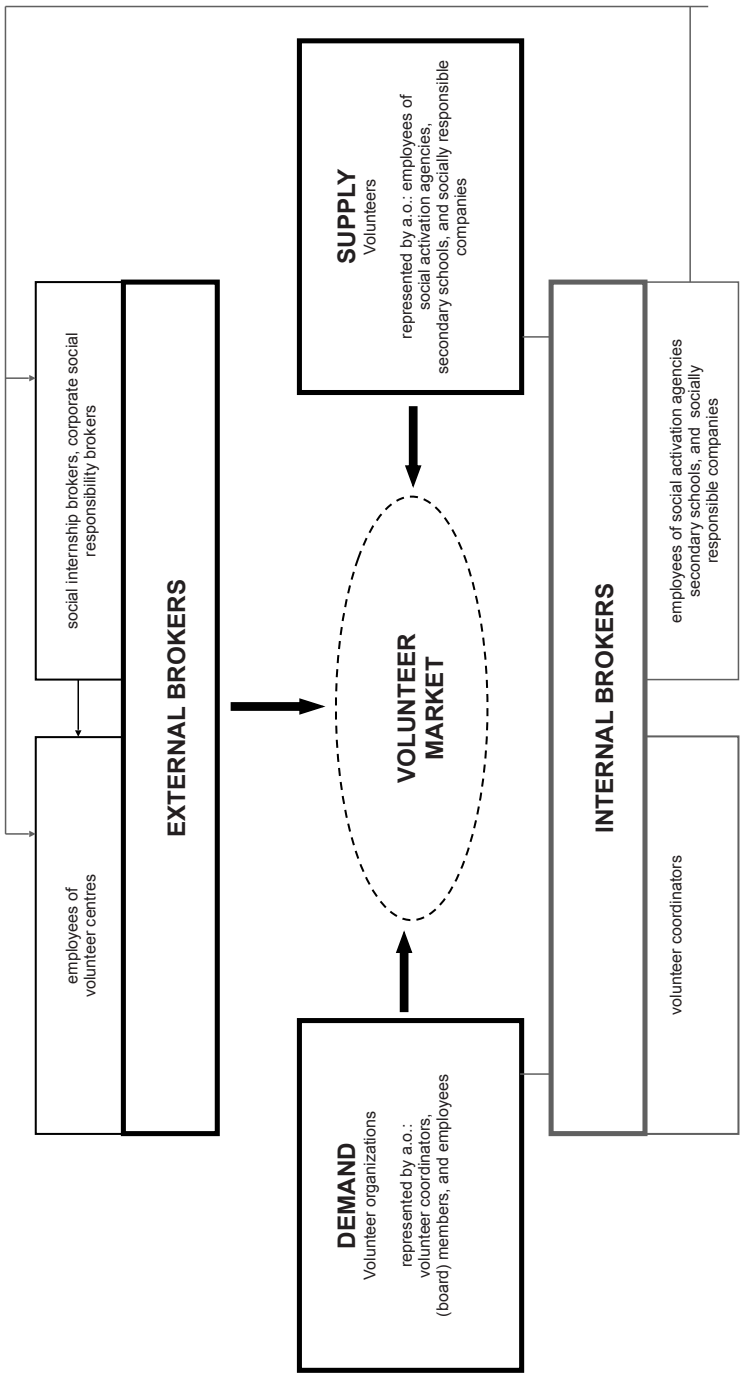
In volunteer brokerage, two types of brokers are distinguished: internal and external brokers. External volunteer brokers have no direct relationship with the requesting or offering party. Whereas an internal volunteer broker does. Volunteer centres play a central role as external volunteer brokers. They not only provide volunteer brokerage themselves, but usually also facilitate volunteer brokerage through other external volunteer brokers, such as social internship brokers and corporate social responsibility brokers. In 2011, there were an estimated 220 volunteer centres in the Netherlands. The number of municipalities in the Netherlands is 418. This means that more than half of the municipalities have their own volunteer centre. The remaining municipalities have access to a volunteer centre in a neighbouring municipality (van den Bosch, Hoffman & Wilbrink, 2002; Stubbe & van Dijk, 2006; Terpstra, Ploegmakers & van Laar, 2008; Movisie, 2011b; Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten, 2011).

In the field, various terms are used for volunteer centres: volunteering job bank, volunteering information point and service point volunteering. According to research by Movisie (Terpstra et al., 2008), a majority of the volunteer centres[3] (65%) are part of a larger organization, such as a broad welfare foundation or a municipal organization. A quarter (24%) of the volunteer centres operate independently. The volunteer centres employ an average of 2.5 paid employees (in FTEs) and 6.4 volunteers. Volunteer brokerage is usually the core task of the volunteer centres. In 2007, an average of 33.3 mediations per month were carried out online via the Internet and 32.9 offline at the office of the volunteer centre. Offline mediations performed in-house were more often successful (70%) than via the Internet (58%). Successful means: “a completed job or placement of at least 3 months” (Terpstra et al., 2008, p. 11). In the context of social internships, an average of 160 pupils per volunteer centre were mediated. In addition to volunteer brokerage, volunteer centres also provide services such as information and advice, promotion of expertise, representation of volunteers’ interests and promotion of volunteering.

Volunteer coordinators are the main group of internal volunteer brokers. They operate on the demand side. They do this both professionally and on a voluntary basis. The degree of autonomy varies. In some organizations, the coordinator operates almost independently. In others, there is close contact with the national umbrella and/or strict guidelines to follow from within the organization. There is no insight into the success rate of the mediations carried out by volunteer coordinators. It is possible that organizations keep internal statistics about this. In addition to volunteer brokerage, volunteer coordinators are also involved in coaching and training volunteers, subsidy acquisition and the maintenance of internal and external contacts. In daily practice, this wide range of tasks is quite a challenge for the coordinators, threatening

overload (van der Klein & Oudenampsen, 2010). Volunteer coordinators are particularly active in volunteer organizations in the care sector. In a study (Dekker et al., 2008) on the demand for voluntary action, more than 90% of the care organizations surveyed were found to work with a coordinator. Devilee found a slightly lower number in an earlier study in 2005. According to his data, one third of volunteer organizations work with a volunteer coordinator. For the care sector this is 80%. However, in the sports and recreation sector only 22% of organizations work with volunteer coordinators and this is likely to decrease. Organizations in this sector are increasingly less convinced of the usefulness of coordinators in solving volunteer shortages. Concrete figures on the number of active coordinators are often lacking. However, for some organizations from the National Platform Volunteer Organizations in Healthcare [LOVZ] this is known from research by the Verwey-Jonker Institute (van der Klein & Oudenampsen, 2010). For example, the number of coordinators at Humanitas is 950, at the Johanniter Hulphulp Foundation 350, at the Foundation for Cooperating Voluntary Emergency Services 400 and at the Volunteers Palliative Terminal Care Netherlands 450.

On the supply side, internal volunteer brokers can be found at social activation agencies (departments of social affairs/social services of municipalities, welfare institutions and reintegration agencies), secondary schools and companies. In practice, social activation agencies increasingly outsource volunteer brokerage to volunteer centres. The same applies to secondary schools and socially responsible companies. They often work together with social internship brokers and corporate social responsibility brokers, who often operate under the umbrella of volunteer centres (van den Bosch et al., 2002; Stubbe & van Dijk, 2006; Movisie, 2011a, b, c, d).
Figure 1 summarizes this schematically. The figure has been compiled on the basis of various sources already mentioned in the text and inspired by a similar model for job placement by van Soest (2005).



(Inspired by: Van Soest, 2005)

Figure 1: Brokers on the Dutch volunteer market

USE OF VOLUNTEER BROKERAGE

On the demand side, internal volunteer brokerage is used by organizations where volunteer coordinators or employees/members with a similar job are employed. These are mainly volunteer organizations in the care sector.
External volunteer brokerage is generally not a common option for volunteer organizations to recruit (new) volunteers. Their own network is an especially important search and recruitment channel. This emerges from a study by Regioplan Beleidsonderzoek (Dekker et al., 2008) on the demand side of voluntary action. Many organizations approach volunteers mainly through a mutual connection (74%) or personally (64%). The volunteer brokerage service of volunteer centres is only used to a limited extent (24%). In comparison with other sectors (art/culture, education, sports/recreation and advocacy), it appears that the care and welfare sector make most use of the services of volunteer centres. The study on the position of volunteers and volunteer organizations in health care (Plemper et al., 2006) paints a similar picture. The most common method of recruitment in the health care sector is the personal approach[4]. Furthermore, volunteer centres and the local media are important recruitment channels.

The reason for volunteer organizations to choose certain ways of recruiting is mainly practical, namely because they "prove to work best" (85%) and because they "have no time and money for other ways" (16%). This emerges from the study by Regioplan Beleidsonderzoek (Dekker et al., 2008).
Specific causes of the limited use of volunteer brokerage by volunteer centres were mentioned in a study by Zuidam and Bouwmeester (2004). In this study, a distinction is made between organizations with professionals (particularly health care and welfare institutions) and organizations without professionals (particularly sports clubs and idealistic associations). It appears that the first group does not want to become too dependent on external organizations, such as volunteer centres, for the recruitment of volunteers. According to these organizations, the results of the volunteer centres would also leave something to be desired. A positive match between volunteer and organization is only made sporadically. For the second group of organizations, unfamiliarity with volunteer centres plays a role. A more recent survey (van der Klein & Oudenampsen, 2010) among organizations united in the National Consultation Voluntary Care Organizations [LOVZ] also cited poor results as a reason for the low level of cooperation with volunteer centres.

As far as the supply side is concerned, it is difficult to determine to what extent volunteers make use of external volunteer brokerage. Giving in the Netherlands 2005 (Bekkers, 2005) can shed some light on this. This study looked at the way in which volunteers were recruited. It turned out that 70% of the volunteers (in 2004) were asked. In 60% of the cases this was

done by members of the organization. Often the volunteers themselves (47%) were already involved in the organization. The results of the study by Plemper et al. (2006) in the healthcare sector point in the same direction. The majority of volunteers (80%) were approached personally. Only a limited group appeared to have come in through a volunteering job bank (16%) or a volunteer centre (20%).

Internal volunteer brokerage is applied to volunteers as part of special projects such as social internships, social activation and corporate social responsibility. In practice, however, this does not happen very often. As already noted, internal brokers generally outsource volunteer brokerage to external brokers.

SUCCESS FACTORS

Research in the field of voluntary action has identified several factors that increase the chances of a good match. These include pride and respect, as well as the motivation of the future volunteer.

In general, when recruiting volunteers, it is important to appeal to feelings of pride and respect in order to increase the attractiveness of the organization. This is one of the conclusions of a series of experiments carried out as part of a study (Boezeman, 2009) into the management of volunteer organizations. In one of the experiments, non-volunteers were presented with information about a fictitious volunteer organization. This information was varied across the research conditions. It turned out that people are more willing to volunteer for an organization when they expect to be able to derive pride and appreciation from this based on information about the success of the organization. In addition, it became clear that when volunteer organizations are too preoccupied with their success, this is counterproductive when recruiting. “Emphasizing that a volunteer organization is successful ... has a negative impact on volunteer recruitment. It does not generate any expected feelings of pride among non-volunteers but makes people think that they are not needed as a volunteer at the volunteer organization” (Boezeman, 2009, p. 165). Information about support from the organization also proved to have a positive effect on the expected feelings of respect, according to the outcome of another experiment (Boezeman, 2009).

The importance of motivation was established by, among others, Clary et al. (1998). They showed that volunteers’ satisfaction with their work is greater the more this work matches their motivation to volunteer. They based this on a survey among older hospital volunteers. As part of the survey, volunteers were first given the Volunteer Functions Inventory [VFI]. The VFI can be used to determine what motivates people to volunteer. 16 weeks later it

was measured to what extent the volunteers were satisfied with their work and to what extent this work matched their motives. This was done on the basis of a specially developed questionnaire.

Later research by Houle, Sagarin and Kaplan (2005) confirms this finding. They conducted research among introductory psychology students. First the VFI was taken from the participants in the research. After this the students received a description of eight different volunteering tasks. They were asked to arrange these tasks on the basis of personal preference. Finally, the participants had to indicate to what extent the eight tasks mentioned above appealed to the different motives for voluntary work for them personally. Analysis of the research data made it clear that volunteers do not randomly choose a certain type of volunteering, but are guided by the extent to which this task appeals to their motives. So, if volunteers are given the opportunity to choose volunteering tasks that meet their motives, this will lead to more positive work experiences, the researchers assume.

In contrast to other recruitment methods, volunteer brokerage offers extensive opportunities to respond to the factors mentioned. By means of matching (intake, recruitment, selection), the feelings and motives of volunteers can be paired. The same applies to the provision of information about organizations. Both through personal contact, as well as through written and digital volunteer vacancy lists, this can be explicitly addressed and matched. It is not known whether and to what extent there is room for such far-reaching coordination in the daily practice of volunteer brokerage.

MATCHING AS A BINDING AGENT

Volunteer brokerage offers options not only for finding but also for binding volunteers. This is because it is possible to influence the process of binding through matching, even before a volunteer joins an organization.

The importance of matching for binding volunteers was demonstrated by Clary et al. (1998). They investigated whether a good match between motives and volunteering influenced the (intended) duration of voluntary action. They did this with a group of economics students, who had to do volunteer work as part of their studies. At the start of the research, the VFI was taken from the students. Approximately 12 weeks later they were presented with another questionnaire. In this questionnaire they were asked about:

- the perceived benefits of volunteering (in terms of aligning their motives with volunteering)
- the satisfaction with the chosen voluntary work

- the intention to continue working as a volunteer in the short or long term

It turned out that students who had chosen work that matched their motives were not only satisfied with their work, but also had the intention to continue to volunteer in the near or distant future. This applied to a lesser extent to students whose work and motives did not match well.

On the basis of the results of the study of Boezeman (2009), it can also be concluded that the binding of volunteers can be controlled by means of matching. After all, the same feelings of pride and appreciation that play a role in the decision of people to enter into a volunteer relationship with an organization also determine the later connection with that organization, or as Boezeman (2009, p. 173) puts it: "Feelings of pride and respect among volunteers ... [contribute to] involvement in the volunteer organization and the intention to remain a volunteer at the volunteer organization".

The research by Liao-Troth (2005) is also worth mentioning in this context. He investigated the psychological contract of volunteers and investigated to what extent (functional) motives and personality factors of volunteers influence the sustainability of the relationship with volunteer organizations. The psychological contract is defined as "the informal[5] reciprocal agreement of a work environment from the perspective of the individual" (Liao-Troth, 2005, p. 511). Liao-Troth's (2005) research involved students who were active as volunteers. The VFI was used to measure their motives. The psychological contract was determined using an adapted version of the Psychological Contract Inventory developed by Rousseau (in Liao-Troth, 2001). The personality of the volunteers was measured online with The Big Five Personality Test (see John & Srivastava, 1999). Different personality factors appeared to be related to certain types of psychological contracts. From the point of view of the recruitment and selection of volunteers, the results of the above-mentioned research are interesting. After all, the type of psychological contract says something about the nature and permanence of a volunteer's working relationship with an organization. When an organization has a preference for one specific psychological contract, starting points are offered to steer the selection process. Some reservation with regard to the generalization of the findings is still advisable, because these findings only concern students.

CONCLUSION EN DISCUSSION

This chapter investigated how volunteer brokerage is implemented in the Netherlands and what value it has and can have for the volunteer market. Volunteer brokerage brings supply and demand together in volunteer work. It takes place on two levels: external and internal.

Unlike internal volunteer brokerage, there is no direct relationship between the broker and the requesting or offering party in external brokerage. Both forms of volunteer brokerage are used on the demand side (volunteer organizations) and on the supply side (volunteers).
On the demand side, especially among volunteer organizations in the care sector, internal brokerage is used most frequently. This is provided by volunteer coordinators working in the organizations concerned. External volunteer brokerage is not a common option for these organizations. The same applies to organizations from other sectors (art/culture, education, sports/recreation and advocacy). Recruitment of volunteers is mainly through a mutual connection or in person. If external volunteer brokers are used, this is usually only within the care and welfare sectors. Poor experiences, disappointing results, a need for independence and lack of knowledge and experience on the part of the volunteer organizations stand in the way of frequent use of external brokers for the time being.
On the supply side, external volunteer brokerage is of the utmost importance. Volunteer centres play a central role here. They offer brokerage in the context of special volunteer projects such as a social internship, corporate social responsibility and social activation. This is mainly aimed at representatives of volunteers. The significance for individual volunteers is less. They are mainly recruited through other channels. It is noteworthy that in the health care sector, where a lot of work is done with internal brokers, i.e. volunteer coordinators, the volunteer shortages are greatest. This can partly be attributed to an increasing demand and changing supply. However, this problem also applies to organizations in other sectors. Another explanation can be found in the large task load of volunteer coordinators. Possibly because of the many other and often complex tasks they must do, the coordinators cannot invest enough time and energy in attracting and mediating volunteers.
A consideration would be to lighten the workload of the volunteer coordinators by joining forces with volunteer centres. Volunteer centres can provide support by taking over part of the brokerage process. This can include intake, recruitment and a first selection. Good communication between the volunteer coordinator and the volunteer centre is an essential condition. The coordinator has been introduced into the organization and has specialist information that is relevant for making a good match.
The existing capacity of volunteer centres in the Netherlands is more than sufficient to realise such cooperation. However, a lack of confidence in the services offered can be an obstacle. This is an important fact for volunteer centres. They need to profile themselves more strongly and better. There is also a need to look critically at ways of improving (the results of) the brokerage process. In particular, the underperformance of digital brokerage compared to personal brokerage deserves attention. In these times of increasingly far-reaching automation, this form of brokerage will become increasingly important. This is also critical outside the context of collaboration. The research findings concerning success factors for finding and binding volunteers can provide handles.

Scientific research has shown that feelings (of pride and respect) and motives largely determine the outcome of a recruitment campaign. Volunteer brokerage offers distinct possibilities to respond to this by means of matching. These factors are also important for the retention of volunteers. It seems that brokers, volunteer organizations and volunteers are not yet sufficiently aware of these possibilities. It is considered useful to bring the value of volunteer brokerage for finding and binding volunteers to the attention of the parties involved. This publication can be seen as a first step in this direction.

Under the conditions mentioned above, the use of volunteer centres in other sectors is also worth considering. As a recruitment method, these organizations prefer the personal approach and the approach through a mutual connection. According to them, these are the most effective methods. The results show otherwise. After all, almost 40% of the organizations still have a shortage of volunteers. As these organizations usually no longer have a volunteer coordinator, a board or staff member involved can act as a contact person for the volunteer centre.

Notes

1. The TBO talks about students.
2. On 1 January 2007, CIVIQ was merged into Movisie, a national knowledge institute offering a comprehensive approach of social issues.
3. At the time of the study (2007), the number of volunteer centres was estimated at 238.
4. Also referred to as a word-of-mouth approach in the study in question.
5. As opposed to a formal agreement such as an employment contract or in this case a volunteer contract.

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CHAPTER 3

Finding the perfect volunteer match

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ABSTRACT

Demand for volunteers in the Netherlands has increased in recent years. This relates to stricter laws and regulations, the changing deployment of volunteers and reforms in the care. From their role as volunteer brokers, volunteer centres can form part of the solution to the growing demand for volunteers. The success of volunteer brokerage remains relatively limited, however. Previously conducted literature research (chapter 2) has shown which factors contribute to the success of volunteer brokerage. This chapter describes the daily brokerage practices of volunteer centres and indicates when and how the success factors found can be used in this brokerage practices to improve the result. The data is derived from a field study among volunteer centres, volunteer organizations and volunteers in the Dutch province South Holland.

INTRODUCTION

The Netherlands has an extensive network of about 240 volunteer centres. The first volunteer centres were established in 1970 on the initiative of the then Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Social Work [CRM], in response to the increasing professionalisation and institutionalisation of society. The Grant Scheme for Volunteer Centres from 1977 and the Temporary Incentive Scheme for Volunteer Work [TSV] from 2001 to 2004 provided important incentives for further growth in the number of volunteer centres. Volunteer centres have an extensive range of tasks. They encourage and promote volunteering and provide information, training, advice and support in this field. In addition, as volunteer brokers they play an active role in bringing together demand (volunteer organizations) and supply (volunteers). This brokerage function is often a core task for volunteer centres (Hetem, 2014; Ploegmakers et al., 2011; Terpstra et al., 2008; van den Bos, 2006; van den Bos, Brudney, Meijs & Hoorn, 2005).

Many organizations, particularly in the care industry, have experienced an increasing need for volunteers in recent years. This is due to stricter legislation and regulations and a changing deployment of volunteers: less all-round and long-term, with more focus on one task or project and only for a limited period of time. It is expected that the need for volunteers will be felt even more as a result of the reforms in the care industry. Care tasks are being transferred from the national government to the municipalities. These municipalities, together with their citizens, must first look for solutions to care issues close to home before official care is called in. This will enable care tasks to be handled more efficiently and more cheaply. However, it does call for the greater involvement of volunteers (Bekkers & Boezeman, 2009; Dekker, Mevissen & Stouten, 2008; Devilee, 2005; Movisie, 2014; Plemper, Scholten, Oudenampsen, Overbeek, Dekker & Visser, 2006; Rutte & Samsom, 2012).

Volunteer centres can, as volunteer brokers, contribute to a solution for the increasing demand for volunteers. However, the degree of success of volunteer brokerage is still relatively limited. Half of the mediations that take place offline at the physical volunteer centre are successful. For internet mediations this is 37%. A mediation is called successful when a volunteer is placed in a delineated job or for a period of three months (Ploegmakers et al., 2011).

A literature study (van Gilst et al., 2011) has already looked at ways to increase the benefits of volunteer brokerage. A number of success factors have been identified, namely pride, respect and motivation of the volunteer. This chapter investigates how these success factors can be applied in the daily practice of volunteer brokerage. This is done on the basis of the following two research questions:

1. How is volunteer brokerage carried out in practice?
2. When and how can success factors for matching volunteers and organizations that work with volunteers be implemented in practice?

The data was collected in a field study among volunteer centres and their clients (organizations and volunteers) in the province of South Holland.

The chapter is structured as follows. First of all, the design and analysis of the field study are explained. Next, the results of the field study are discussed and the first research question is answered. The following is a brief summary of the previously described literature study (van Gilst et al., 2011) into success factors for volunteer brokerage. The findings of this research are linked to the results of the field study. This answers the second research question. It concludes with a short reflection and recommendations for the future.

DESIGN AND ANALYSIS OF THE FIELD STUDY

In the period between the end of 2008 and the end of 2010, a field study was carried out in the province of South Holland on the practice of volunteer brokerage by volunteer centres. At the time of the research, 38 volunteer centres were established in South Holland. The total number of volunteer centres in the Netherlands was 238.
In order to obtain as complete a picture as possible of the practice of volunteer brokerage and to minimize method-related limitations, triangulation was used (Boeije, 2012). For data collection, three different methods (survey, interview and document collection) and four different data sources (volunteer centres, organizations, volunteers and documents) were used.

A start was made with a survey among all of the volunteer centres in South Holland. The survey consisted of a combination of multiple choice and open questions. The response rate was 74% (N=28). Table 1 gives a specification of the participating volunteer centres. If possible, a comparison is made with the results of three national surveys (Ploegmakers et al., 2011; Stubbe & van Dijk, 2006; Terpstra et al., 2008). It should be noted that in the last national study there was a reduction in representativeness due to the low response rate. In terms of size and degree of independence of the volunteer centres, there are no major differences compared to the national studies. With regard to certification, however, this is the case. This may be due to the underrepresentation[1] of certified volunteer centres in South Holland in the national survey in 2008. Certification refers to the issuing, on request and after testing, of a quality mark to local volunteer centres by the Association of Dutch Volunteer Organizations [NOV]. In 2010 the quality mark was renewed and volunteer centres had to submit a new application. The label was abolished in 2014.

Table 1: Comparison with national survey data

Surveys / Features volunteer centres	Survey Tranzo (N=28)	National survey 2006 (N=66)	National survey 2008 (N=65)	National survey 2011 (N=44)
Size				
Small:				
0-2 paid employees	71%	65%	unknown	different classification used
Medium:				
3-5 paid employees	21%	21%		
Large:				
>5 paid employees	7%	14%		
Degree of independence				
Independent	18%	16%	24%	13%
Part of an organization	82%	84%	76%	84%
Certification				
Certificate NOV	11%	unknown	31%	8%
Certificate NOV application				11%
Different certificate	3%			
No certificate	86%		69%	

The survey was followed by three rounds of interviews. Eight volunteer centres, nine organizations that had recruited volunteers through a volunteer centre and eight volunteers that had been mediated to volunteer through a volunteer centre were interviewed. The interviews were semi-structured. In addition to factual information (about the volunteer centre, organization or volunteer), particular attention was paid to the nature and course of the volunteer brokerage process in daily practice. Special attention was paid to the role of the Internet and the recruitment and selection of volunteers and vacancies. Documents were also collected during the interview rounds. These included existing materials such as forms, reports, information and PR material and e-mails.

The analysis of the research data took place in phases. A first analysis was made after the survey was closed. The results of this analysis formed the basis for the design and execution of the interviews. A second analysis concerned the interview data. The documents collected were also involved in this analysis. The analysis took place via a process of reduction and labelling (Baarda et al., 2009; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The computer program Atlas.ti (Evers, 2004; Mortelmans, 2001) was used as a tool. In a final overall analysis, the findings of the previous analyses were merged, assessed and interpreted in combination.

THE PRACTICE OF VOLUNTEER BROKERAGE

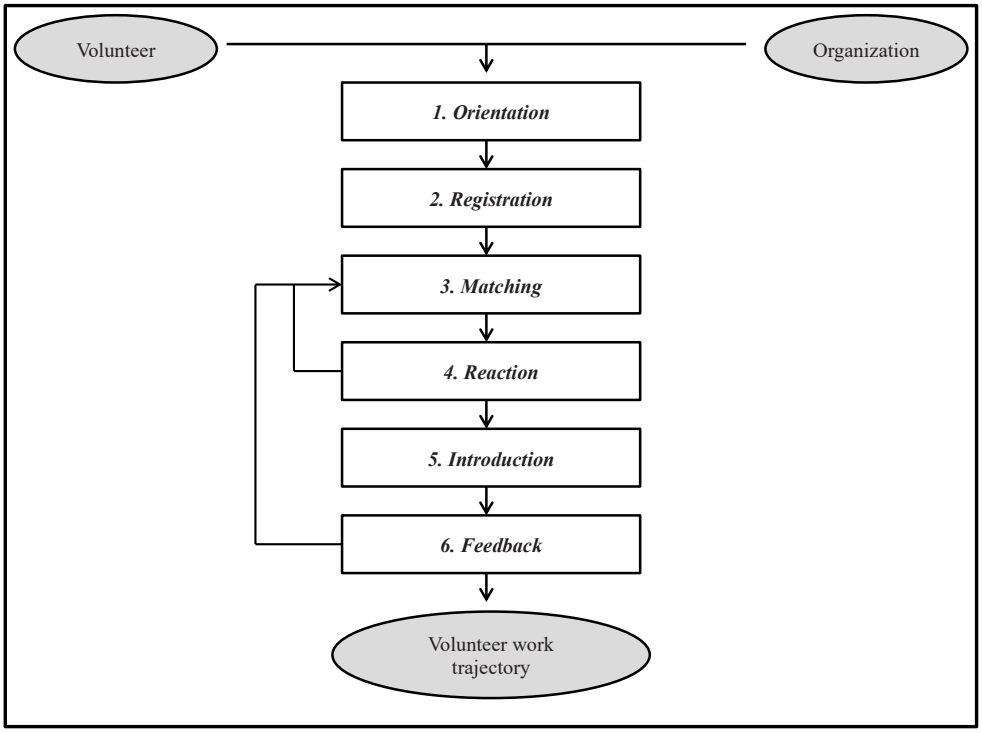
Volunteer brokerage focuses on bringing together demand (organizations working with volunteers) and supply (volunteers) on the volunteer market. The volunteer centres interviewed have a varied supply of volunteers. Young and old make use of the brokerage function, with older people often being the biggest users. Special user groups are volunteers with a range of backgrounds such as those who are integrating into Dutch culture, non-native speakers, the unemployed, people with disabilities, young people with mental health problems, people participating in social activation and clients of reintegration agencies. Much of the demand comes from organizations active in the field of welfare and care and, to a lesser extent, from sports organizations.

The analysis of the data from the field study showed that volunteer centres in South Holland follow a similar working method in volunteer brokerage. In this working method, six phases can be distinguished: orientation, registration, matching, reaction, introduction and feedback. Figure 1 gives a schematic overview of this. Phases can be addressed through both personal contact with employees of volunteer centres and online via the Internet. Complete online volunteer brokerage without any personal contact was not (yet) an issue at the time of the study. In the following section, the various phases of the brokerage process are explained in detail.

Start of volunteer brokerage

Both volunteers and organizations can start the volunteer brokerage process. They can be put on the track of a volunteer centre in different ways. Volunteers from the study have often found their way to the volunteer centre through publications in the written media or on the Internet and through people in their immediate vicinity. Some of the organizations in the study were already familiar with the volunteer centre because they belonged to the same welfare foundation, municipal organization or because the volunteer centre had introduced itself to them. Organizations also came to the volunteer centre through publications on the Internet or through the advocacy of other organizations.

Figure 1: Phasing of the volunteer brokerage process



Phase 1: Orientation

In the Orientation phase, volunteers can view a list of vacancies without obligation. This can be done via the website (digital volunteer job bank) of the volunteer centre and via volunteer job folders (physical volunteer job bank). In addition to the volunteer job vacancies, the website also usually offers all kinds of practical information on matters related to volunteer work, such as insurance, volunteer agreement, and courses. The volunteer job folders are available for inspection at the office of the volunteer centre and sometimes also at other locations (e.g. annexe, town hall and the library). At the time of the interviews, the average number of vacancies at volunteer centres was 268. The range of vacancies was diverse and could include long-term work as well as short-term jobs and one-off projects.

The orientation possibilities for organizations are more limited than for volunteers. Like volunteers, organizations have access to a wide range of practical information about volunteer work via the website or the office of the local volunteer centre. It is not common local volunteer centres to provide organizations with access to volunteer files. Often volunteer centres do not have extensive volunteer files and volunteers have to be explicitly recruited for vacancies.

Phase 2: Registration

Registration is usually required in order to be able to proceed with volunteer brokerage. If a volunteer sees an interesting vacancy on the website at a particular organization, they must first make themselves known to the volunteer centre, for example by filling in a (contact) form online. In response, the volunteer centre can send the contact details of the organization by e-mail. However, a volunteer centre can also call the volunteer or invite them for a personal interview. This is the most common procedure among the interviewed volunteer centres. One of the reasons for this is the fact that volunteer centres are accountable to their grant provider on the number of mediations that they perform. Another factor is that, for reasons of privacy, many volunteer centres do not publish contact details of organizations on their websites. For smaller organizations, the contact details are sometimes linked to a private address. As such, a general description of the organizations which have vacancies is sufficient. In the case of personal volunteer brokerage, the application is often integrated into the coordination phase.

Organizations also have to register in order to make use of the brokerage function of the volunteer centre. Registration can be done online via the website, or in person with an employee of the volunteer centre. The latter, however, is less common. When registering for the first time, both organization and vacancy details are requested. Once an organization is known to the volunteer centre, only vacancy details will suffice. To facilitate the repeated registration of vacancies, an account can be created for the organization.

Phase 3: Matching

The Matching phase starts with the collection of information. Volunteers are asked, in a personal conversation or sometimes by means of questionnaires, about matters such as education, qualities, hobbies, interests, wishes, feelings, motivation and ambitions. Tests can also be used to obtain more clarity. However, this happens only minimally. Tests are seen as superfluous, threshold raising, time consuming and an extreme tool utilised when the employee of the volunteer centre and the volunteer cannot work it out together. In these situations, the Focus Test and the Choosing Volunteer Work Test are used, among other things (Bruinsma, Dirksen & Scholten, 2002; Scholten, 2001; Vermeer, 1999). These tests can be used to determine which type of volunteer work best fits the personality and motivation or interest of a volunteer. Then one or more suitable vacancies are searched for. Personal information, job profiles and possibly test results inform the search. In addition, intuition, or the personal impression of the employee of the volunteer centre regarding the volunteer can be included in the selection of vacancies. If a suitable vacancy cannot be found, a new vacancy can possibly be created through active recruitment at organizations. This is not a common option, because volunteer centres usually have enough vacancies in stock. The possibilities for matching via the Internet are minimal, because there is no personal guidance. It is often limited to comparing vacancies.

As far as organizations are concerned, new applications are checked to see what type of organization is involved and whether the organization is "bona fide", as an employee of a volunteer centre puts it. Some volunteer centres combine this with an organization visit. In the case of vacancies, it is checked whether the specifications of the volunteer centre with regard to volunteer work are being met. The vacancy text is also assessed in terms of content and text. If necessary, the volunteer centre can provide support in drawing up a vacancy text. The assessment aspect implies that, in this phase, the personal contribution of the volunteer centre is required. After approval, the vacancy is included in the volunteer vacancy list and made accessible to volunteers via the website or folders. It is usually not possible to link a vacancy directly to a volunteer, because volunteer centres do not have an (extensive) database of job seeking volunteers. It is necessary to wait for a volunteer to respond. It may be possible to actively recruit volunteers for a specific vacancy. 68% of the volunteer centres surveyed and 78% of the volunteer centres interviewed use active recruitment. This is often done through advertisements (newspapers, own shop window or website) and promotion at events such as markets and fairs. In addition, sometimes volunteers who have already been mediated and have indicated that they want to stay informed of new vacancies for volunteers are contacted.

Phase 4: Reaction

When a suitable vacancy has been found, the requesting organization will be contacted to arrange an introductory interview. Multiple scripts are possible:

- The volunteer makes an appointment. This is the case when volunteer brokerage takes place via the Internet, but sometimes also with personal brokerage.
- The volunteer centre makes the appointment on behalf of the volunteer. This can be done in the presence of the volunteer, so that agendas can be coordinated directly.
- At the request of the volunteer centre, the organization takes the initiative for arranging an appointment. This means that the contact details of the volunteer are made available to the organization with approval. The volunteer centre ensures that the organization actually contacts the volunteer.

Phase 5: Introduction

The introduction between the volunteer and the organization takes place in the context of a personal conversation. The volunteer and the representative(s) of the organization, such as a board member or coordinator, are present during this meeting. It sometimes happens that an employee from the volunteer centre also attends the interview. The introductory interview usually takes place at the organization. However, a volunteer can also be visited at home. During the introductory interview, it is checked whether the volunteer is suitable for the vacant position. The organizations investigated often use questionnaires as a guide for the interview. Standard subjects in these lists are: general information (name, address, city, telephone number, e-mail address, date of birth) and availability. Variable topics include:

nationality, education, qualities, work experience, hobbies, interests, wishes, expectations and motivation. Depending on the vacancy, the introduction can also include a practical test, for example when volunteers are used as drivers. In addition, a good command of the Dutch language, presentation and appearance can also be taken into account. The same applies to less tangible factors that are described by the respondents as intuition, (gut) feeling, instinct, (first) impression, click(s) and "fingerspitzengefühl".

The introduction is mutual. The volunteer is also informed about the organization and the vacant position. Some (larger) organizations use information brochures or folders for this. The "click factor" and assessment of the activities offered in relation to their own possibilities are important for the interviewed volunteers when getting introduced. Ultimately, the introduction must lead to a decision regarding the acceptance or rejection of the volunteer. Rejection, however, is not always an option. A few interviewees at organizations indicated that it was difficult to reject volunteers, because it concerned volunteer work or because they themselves also worked as volunteers. A possible consequence of this is that they work with unsuitable candidates. An organization that experiences problems with rejection uses a waiting list as a selection mechanism. All volunteers who register are placed on the waiting list after an introductory interview. However, volunteers who were assessed negatively during the introduction are not called up and remain on the waiting list.

An assignment is usually officially confirmed by a volunteer agreement or a volunteer contract. This includes arrangements between the volunteer and the organization, for example, on the type of work, working hours, probationary period, insurance and reimbursement of expenses. In some organizations, the agreement is only concluded after a trial period of a few weeks. The agreement is usually in writing, but can also be verbal. Volunteer centres have no direct involvement in the conclusion of a volunteer contract. If desired, they do have an advisory role. They also make sample contracts available.

Phase 6: Feedback

The organization and/or volunteer provide feedback on the outcome of the introduction on their own initiative or at the request of the volunteer centre. If there is no feedback, the volunteer centre often contacts the organization and/or the volunteer. Some volunteer centres use a fixed "after-call procedure" or "call round". The usual feedback period is two to four weeks. The interviews show that feedback serves multiple interests, namely:

- the interest of the volunteer: if the introduction did not go well, the volunteer centre can decide together with the volunteer to re-enter the brokerage process
- the interest of the volunteer centre: in order to account for the subsidy provider, some volunteer centres must provide insight into the number of successful mediations. Furthermore, feedback provides insight into the functioning of the brokerage function

- the interest of the organization: if a volunteer does not meet the requirements, the volunteer centre can nominate another volunteer for the vacant position

Volunteer work trajectory

In the event of a successful match, the volunteer enters the volunteer work trajectory and the role of the volunteer centre is basically played out. From then on, the organization is responsible for supervising and managing the volunteer. This also applies to the insurance of the volunteer. In most municipalities, organizations can claim a collective volunteer insurance from the Association of Dutch Municipalities [VNG] (VNG, 2014) for this.

GUIDANCE FOR SUCCESSFUL VOLUNTEER BROKERAGE

Recent review of the literature (van Gilst et al., 2011) has provided information on factors that contribute to the success of volunteer brokerage. It showed that pride, respect and motivation of the volunteers play an important role. The willingness of people to volunteer for an organization depends on the extent to which they expect, based on information about the organization, to be able to derive pride and respect from it. In the long term, feelings of pride and respect contribute to commitment to the organization and increase the chances that volunteers will continue to work for the organization. In addition, volunteers' satisfaction increases as the work offered more closely matches their motives for volunteering. It also increases the chance that people will continue to volunteer in the future.

Based on the phasing of the volunteer brokerage process, it can be indicated when and how the identified success factors can be implemented in practice. When addressing feelings of pride and respect among volunteers, information about the organization is important. The Matching phase offers the best opportunities for this. In this phase vacancies offered are assessed and edited and the image of the organization behind the vacancy can be influenced. Oral explanations in the personal interview with a volunteer can also steer the image. It is important that volunteer centres check whether the right image is conveyed in the written, oral and online presentation of organizations and whether adjustment is necessary. If necessary, help can be called in from PR experts.

In the Introduction phase, information about an organization is also provided. This is mainly a matter for the organization itself. Volunteer centres can, however, play an advisory and supporting role here. In all cases, good coordination between the local volunteer centre and the organization is a requirement in order to guarantee an unambiguous image.

The Matching phase also offers the best possibilities in terms of matching offered work (vacancies) to the motives of volunteers. In this phase, employees of volunteer centres gather information about the volunteer and search for a suitable vacancy. In the case of personal contact, the motivation of the volunteer can be considered in detail and responded to directly. Explicit attention to motivation in interview protocols and questionnaires is important. In addition, tests can be used. A number of tests are available to make motives visible in a standardized way. In practice, these tests are hardly ever used and are regarded as superfluous and obstructive. In view of the value of tests, it is considered useful to reconsider their use or to develop more effective alternatives to conventional tests.

The fact is that, in practice, matching takes place online to some extent. Volunteers choose their own vacancies. It is not clear which factors drive this self-selection. On top of that, it is much more difficult to make motives visible and to involve them in the matching process during online volunteer brokerage. Online testing can offer a solution. However, the disadvantage is that no explanation can be given when questions are not or misunderstood. Also, the test scores cannot be compared with other information, which limits the possibilities of interpretation. For the time being, this argues in favour of a personal intervention of employees of volunteer centres in the case of online matching.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The greatest value of the research findings described lies in the concrete starting points for improving results, based on the elaborated practice model. This provides volunteer centres with a helping hand to investigate and increase the efficiency of their volunteer brokerage function. In realising this, it is important that the volunteer centres ask critical questions with regards to:

- the place and attention for motivation of volunteers in the process of volunteer brokerage
- the presentation of and communication about vacancies and organizations, in relation to feelings of pride and respect of volunteers
- the use and suitability of tests

It should be noted that for some customer groups (social activation, reintegration) it will be more difficult to make motives visible than for others, which poses an additional challenge.

In addition, the practice model also provides volunteer centres with a framework within which they can explain and provide insight into their volunteer brokerage activities. This can be important for the matching of activities, but also for the transferability of knowledge and experience in, for example, the training of new brokers. For volunteer organizations and volunteers, as clients of volunteer centres, transparency also counts. In this way, no false

expectations can arise about the nature and way in which services are provided. At the same time, the model is a useful tool for subsidy providers to justify the efforts of employees and the spending of subsidy funds.

In the light of current developments in care, the research findings are also significant. More than ever before, it is important to (continue to) inspire volunteers. As a result of the increasing demand for volunteers, there is a danger that people are too quickly and too easily assigned to volunteer activities. Careful matching prevents people from losing their enthusiasm for volunteering and will make them willing to continue volunteering in the future.

The research findings have also yielded a number of interesting themes for further research, such as:

- The role/value of waiting lists: organizations sometimes work with waiting lists for certain volunteer positions. On the one hand this can demotivate volunteers, but on the other hand it can increase the attractiveness of the job.
- Completion of the introduction: volunteers who work at an organization and are involved in the introduction, experience problems with rejecting other volunteers.
- Usability of offline testing for volunteer brokerage: despite the added value of testing, volunteer centres limit the use of testing in matching.
- Deployment and development of suitable online tests: the possibilities of online testing are limited.
- Effective recruitment methods for volunteer centres: faced with a high demand from organizations, volunteer centres are sometimes forced to recruit volunteers.

Finally, some limitations of this study should be mentioned. A first limitation concerns the generalizability of the practice model. As the data collection took place in the province of South Holland, the model reflects the working methods of (a selection of) volunteer centres in this province. It should be investigated whether the model is also more widely applicable in other provinces. A first indication in this respect has been obtained by conducting an extra interview in the province of Groningen. Here, too, the model proved to be valid. Further limitations are inherent to the chosen research methods. Due to the combined research design, these limitations could partly be removed.

Notes

1. Inquiries (M. Terpstra, personal communication, 9 October 2013) revealed that 13% of the volunteer centres surveyed in South Holland had a quality mark.

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CHAPTER 4

Focus on volunteers motivation: the key to successful volunteer brokerage in the Netherlands

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ABSTRACT

This chapter focuses on the use of a volunteer's motivation to improve the results of volunteer brokerage in the Netherlands. It looks into the relation between a volunteer's motivation and volunteer work choice and how this currently is, and could be used in the daily practice of volunteer brokerage. The data is derived from a literature review, a field study among volunteer centres, volunteer organizations and volunteers and a usability study of websites of volunteer centres.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to highlight how the motivation to volunteer can be used to improve the results of volunteer brokerage. Research findings indicate that motivation plays a crucial role in the choice for volunteer work, and the extent of satisfaction with the performance of volunteer work. To this end, an inventory is made of results from scientific research on motivation and its relation to volunteer work choice. These results are then linked to the outcomes from empirical research concerning the daily practice of volunteer brokerage in the Netherlands. On the basis of this, recommendations are given for the optimization of volunteer brokerage.

Volunteer brokerage is one of the potential ways to attract new volunteers. Finding new volunteers has become an increasingly difficult challenge for Dutch organizations that work (together) with volunteers. These so-called volunteer organizations are faced with shortages. Whereas they have had to battle an increasing demand as a result of stricter legislation and regulations by the government for many years combined with a reduced interest among volunteers to take on a long-term commitment, they are now also faced with a decreasing supply of new volunteers signing up (Devilee, 2005; Edinga et al., 2004; Rocques, 2004). According to the outcomes of the biennial survey Giving in The Netherlands [GiN], 45% of Dutch people participated in volunteer work in 2008. In 2014 and 2016, this percentage decreased to 37% and 36% respectively (Bekkers & Boezeman, 2009; Bekkers et al., 2015; de Wit & Bekkers, 2017). This suggests a continuing downward trend. An important reason for this decline is the gradual withdrawal of the government from the field of care provision after the introduction of the Social Support Act [Wmo] in 2007. The Social Support Act aims to foster the independent functioning of people in society for as long as possible. Taking personal responsibility for one's own problems and making an appeal for the support and care of other citizens is encouraged. Dutch citizens are increasingly expected to take care of their nearest and dearest, such as family, friends and neighbours when they are no longer able to do so themselves. This is referred to as informal care. As a result, people are getting more involved in providing informal care and have less time to participate in volunteering (Bekkers et al., 2015; de Boer & Klerk, 2013; Movisie, 2015).

In the Netherlands, around 240 volunteer centres are important suppliers of volunteer brokerage. They match potential volunteers to volunteer-seeking organizations. Volunteer brokerage is classed as successful when a volunteer is placed at an organization for a fixed short-term project or for a period of three months at minimum. The success rate of volunteer brokerage as offered by these volunteer centres is limited: 50% for personal brokerage and 37% for online brokerage (Ploegmakers et al., 2011). It seems worthwhile to investigate the

(possible) role of motivation during volunteer brokerage and how it impacts on the above success rates.

VOLUNTEER'S MOTIVATION AND WORK CHOICE

Particularly within the framework of functional theory, much research has been conducted on the motives of volunteers. According to this theory, volunteer work serves certain personal and social functions that are associated with the motivation to volunteer. These are referred to as motivational functions. Six motivational functions have been identified. The first function, values, has to do with expressing values related to humanitarianism and altruism. The second function, understanding, involves gaining new learning experiences or exercising knowledge, skills and abilities that are often unused. The third function, social, acts as a means to strengthen a person's social relationships. The fourth function, career, concerns career-related benefits. The fifth function, protection, involves eliminating negative aspects surrounding the ego. The last function, enhancement, centres on the growth and development of the ego (Clary et al, 1998; Clary & Snyder, 1999; Widjaja, 2010).

Clary et al. (1998) showed in two separate studies that when individuals are allowed to choose volunteer tasks that meet their motives, this has a positive effect on volunteer satisfaction and the continuation of the volunteer activities. In the first study (Clary et al., 1998, Study 5), 61 older hospital volunteers participated. The Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) was used to determine which motivational functions were important for these volunteers. The *VFI* had been developed and validated by Clary et al. (1998, Study 1, 2, 3) during earlier studies. It is based on their multi-dimensional model of motivation. 16 weeks after the VFI was taken, functionally relevant benefits and the level of satisfaction with the volunteer experience were measured. It turned out that when volunteers received more relevant benefits (related to important motivational functions for them); they were more satisfied with their volunteer work. In other words, the satisfaction of volunteers regarding their volunteer work is greater, as this work better matches their motives for volunteering.
In the second study (Study 6), Clary et al. (1998) conducted a similar survey among 369 undergraduate business students. They found that students who had chosen volunteer work that matched their motives were satisfied with their work. Moreover, these students had the intention to continue volunteering in both the short-term and long-term future. However, for students whose motives and work did not match well, this was less often the case.

Later research findings of Houle et al. (2005) are in line with the findings of Clary et al. (1998). Houle et al. (2005) explored whether motives for volunteering determine the choice for a particular type of volunteer work. 112 introductory psychology students participated in their

study. These students first had to complete the VFI. After completing the VFI, the students' received descriptions of eight volunteer tasks and six volunteer motives. The volunteer tasks included, among other things, reading to the blind and making holiday cards for residents of nursing homes. The six volunteer motives were: values, career, understanding, social, protection and esteem. The students were asked to rank the tasks based on their personal preference. Following the ranking, the students had to indicate to what extent each of the eight volunteer tasks would personally each of the six volunteer motives. Results indicated that volunteers do not randomly choose volunteer tasks. They prefer tasks that are expected to satisfy their important personal motives.

Several researchers have investigated whether it is possible to find a relation between the type of volunteer work that people (want to) do and the motives that drive them to do so. In the Netherlands, Bekkers and Boezeman (2009) analysed the motivation of volunteers in each sector as part of a nationwide biennial survey, Giving in The Netherlands [GiN]. To do so, they made use of the VFI. It appeared that certain motivational functions are more associated with particular sectors of volunteer work than others. The values function, for example, is more positively associated with sectors like health care, probation and victim support, the church and other ideological organizations. However, this function is negatively associated with the sports sector. Another example case is that volunteers involved in activities in the field of community (centre) work and politics are more than averagely motivated by the enhancement function.

Van der Vaart (2010) focused specifically on two sectors of work. She collected data on motivation through an online survey of 790 volunteers working at 10 organizations in the care/support and nature/environment sectors. She took a functional approach to volunteers' motivations based on the principles of Clary et al. (1998) and added pleasure as a seventh motivational function. Motivation was measured by means of the VFI supplemented with two items concerning the pleasure motive. In addition, the survey also included questions about the personal background of the volunteers and aspects of their volunteer work. Van der Vaart (2010) found the values motive of more importance for volunteers in the care/support sector than in the nature/environment sector. This is in line with the aforementioned findings of Bekkers and Boezeman (2009). The pleasure motive turned out to play a bigger role in the nature/environment sector than in the care/support sector. With respect to the other motives, hardly any differences were found between the two sectors. This means that when motives like values or pleasure play a part, volunteers can be specifically linked to either the care/support or the nature/environment sectors. Interestingly, this does not apply to the other motives.

Willems and Walk (2013) went one step further by investigating whether or not specific motives are related to specific tasks. They collected data on functional motives and task preferences through an online questionnaire among 2158 volunteers in the Scouts and Guides Movement in Flanders, Belgium. They made a distinction between internal and external social motives, which led to a set of seven functional motives instead of the basic six. They found evidence for close relations between specific functional motives and specific task preferences. They also found that all functional motives are highly related to two task domains, with tasks concerning interpersonal relations and member orientation. This means that when there are no matching tasks available, volunteers can be given the possibility to do tasks within the two basic task domains. In any case, this satisfies a major part of their functional motives.

In summary, the literature shows that it is important to not just randomly assign volunteers to volunteer tasks, but to take into account the motives that are driving their wish to volunteer. This will lead to good matches in the sense of volunteers who are not only satisfied but also want to (continue to) commit themselves to volunteering in the future. Furthermore, the literature shows that certain motives are related to specific volunteer work sectors and volunteer tasks. This knowledge can be utilised to improve the results of volunteer brokerage, such that they could aid in finding volunteer jobs that better fit the motives of volunteers.

MOTIVATION ASSESSMENT FOR VOLUNTEER BROKERAGE

As has become clear in the previous section, paying specific attention to motivation can make a positive contribution to the outcome of the volunteer brokerage process. For an optimal match it is important that motivation is actually assessed by asking the right questions. Validation of the assessment instrument ensures that the questions are valid and reliable. Moreover, the assessment should not be dependent on chance. This can be achieved by asking questions according to a fixed formulation and sequence. A scoring protocol must also be available so that incorrect interpretations of the answers do not occur. Standardized tests contain specific instructions with regards to the collection and scoring which ensures that the test is carried out according to a certain protocol (Artveldehogeschool Gent, 2019; Baarda & de Goede, 2006).

Information on how Dutch volunteer centres deal with motivation during the volunteer brokerage process is available from van Gilst et al. (2015). The aim of this study was to determine how the success rate of volunteer brokerage can be optimized by volunteer centres. The research included both a literature review and field research (online survey, interviews, document collection) among volunteer centres in the South Holland province in

the Netherlands. The research shows that the current attention paid to motivation is limited, both in personal (offline) volunteer brokerage at a volunteer centre and in online volunteer brokerage via the website. In the case of personal volunteer brokerage, interviews and, less frequently, questionnaires are used to collect information about volunteers. Questions about the individuals' motivations to volunteer are not commonly included in these interviews and questionnaires. The emphasis is mainly on what volunteers want and are able to do, rather than on specifically what motivates them to volunteer. Standardized tests are used to a limited extent by volunteer centres. They are regarded by employees of the volunteer centres as unnecessary, time-consuming, inhibiting, and seen as a last resort in finding suitable volunteer tasks.

The two most used tests at the time of the study were the Focus Test and the Choosing Volunteer Work Test. In the Focus Test (Scholten, 2001a, 2001b; de Vries, 2017), questions are asked about motives, interests, preferences and the qualities of a volunteer. Motives are divided into four types that have to do with being active for a social purpose (ideal motive), meeting people and making new contacts (social motive), elaborating ideas and learning new skills (development motive), and obtaining regularity in daily life (structure motive). The test scores are linked to six personality types (practical, intellectual, artistic, social, enterprising, and precise), which in turn are linked to certain types of activities. The Focus Test offers the possibility to translate the test results directly to suitable volunteer activities that are available at a particular volunteer centre. There is also an abridged version of this test: The Mini Focus Test. The Focus Test is based on the career choice theory of the American sociologist, Holland. This theory focuses mainly on paid work. As such, it is not clear to what extent this test is applicable to the choice of volunteer work.
The Choosing Volunteer Work Test (Vermeer, 1999) is a concise test. It pertains to the interests, personal characteristics, competencies, and important benefits an individual sees in volunteering. Although this test does not deal directly with motives, the answers to the questions about important benefits could give an indication of what motivates people. The test returns examples of possible volunteer activities and possible working sectors that the individual may be suited to. These examples are not based on the actual supply of volunteer jobs at a volunteer centre (van Gilst, 2009; van Gilst et al., 2015).

No research has been performed into the validity and reliability of the above tests as far as can be determined by the current literature review. The documentation website of COTAN, a committee that evaluates tests and questionnaires that are used in the Netherlands, also does not provide further information on the topic (COTAN, 2019). It should be noted that a valid instrument for assessing volunteer's motivations namely the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) was already developed by Clary et al. in 1998. However, the VFI was not yet fully translated and validated for a Dutch setting at the time of the study of van Gilst et al. (2015).

Only certain items had been translated (Bekkers and Boezeman, 2009). A fully translated and validated version has recently become available for the Netherlands (Nieboer et al., 2019).

During online volunteer brokerage, only a limited amount of information is collected, as has become clear in an additional study into the usability of the websites of five volunteer centres which also participated in the aforementioned field study (van Gilst et al., 2020). Depending on the website, this was done via a contact form, creating an account or administering tests. Filling in the contact form or creating an account was only possible after choosing a volunteer vacancy. Whereas tests could be done at any time. This implies that in order to manage the process of volunteer brokerage, tests were the only way to gain insight into the motives of people who want to volunteer. Not all volunteer centres offered tests on their websites. Only two out of the five websites studied offered visitors the opportunity to take a test. Taking the tests was optional and left to the visitors themselves. The tests were also not easy to find. For example, they had not been incorporated into the volunteer job bank, the place where people who want to volunteer look at suitable volunteer jobs. At both of the websites, a Talent Scan was offered. With this scan, the talents of people who want to volunteer were made visible. No questions were asked about the reasons for volunteering or expected volunteering outcomes. One website also offered a special test for young people and a test focused on activities in the care sector. The first test also merely focused on an individuals' talents. The second test dealt with motives, as well as interests, preferences and qualities of people. The outcomes of these tests were never connected to the volunteer vacancies database. People had to interpret the results themselves and find out which volunteer vacancies were suitable for them. No research has been done into the reliability and validity here either.

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The research literature on volunteering indicates that a volunteer's motivation plays an important role in the choice of and satisfaction with volunteer work. In addition, it also impacts on the future commitment of potential volunteers. This is an important fact for volunteer centres. It offers possibilities in managing the process of volunteer brokerage in such a way that optimal results can be achieved. In light of the current developments in the Netherlands concerning volunteering and informal caring, it is all the more important to get the match right. It seems that volunteer centres are not yet taking full advantage of the benefits of volunteers' motivations. Employees of volunteer centres should be made aware of this, for example through targeted information and training.

With regards to the practical implementation of volunteer brokerage, it is recommended that volunteer centres give standardized motivation tests a (more) prominent place in the

volunteer brokerage process. Results show that tests are rarely used in offline volunteer brokerage. If used, volunteer centres prefer the Focus Test and the Choosing Volunteer Work Test. However, the reliability and validity of these tests has not been scientifically established. As such, further research is needed. The translated Volunteer Functions Inventory could offer a reliable and valid alternative. It is important that it is made available for use by volunteer centres. With online brokerage, the use of standardized tests is also limited. Tests are not always available or they are difficult to find. Moreover, not all tests offered online are focused on motivation. This is the case with the Talent Scan. Here too, research data on the validity and reliability of these measures is lacking, therefore prompting the need for additional research.

People who are looking for volunteer work must also be convinced of the importance of testing. This is a challenge in the case of online volunteer brokerage. Visitors of volunteer brokerage websites search for volunteer work without guidance. They can therefore easily skip any tests. Placing the tests in a beneficial location on the website may already have a large impact and would be an improvement on the current situation.

At least as important as identifying motives, is offering volunteer activities that match these motives. Scientific knowledge available in this area can help. Particularly in recent years, research has been conducted into the relation between functional motives and volunteer work sectors/volunteer tasks. However, more research is still needed. It is important that previous, current and future relevant findings are made accessible and comprehensible for the employees of volunteer centres. There should be a constant interaction between science and practice.
From a practical point of view, it should be noted that in the context of online volunteer brokerage the test results should be directly linked to suitable volunteer vacancies on the database. This limits the chance of misinterpretations or even worse, irritation and leaving the website completely.

Finally, two critical comments can be made. This chapter focuses on the situation in the Netherlands and its own specific problems with finding volunteers. In particular with regard to laws and legislation, the situation in other countries will be different. Furthermore, the generalizability of the two Dutch studies cited (van Gilst et al., 2015; van Gilst et al., 2020) is limited. The field study was conducted in only one of the twelve provinces (South Holland) in the Netherlands. While, the usability study involved a selection of websites of just five volunteer centres.

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CHAPTER 5

Usability of volunteer brokerage websites: the why and how of user testing

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ABSTRACT

Dutch volunteer centres offer online volunteer brokerage via their websites. Usability is a crucial factor for the success of this service. It determines whether or not visitors or potential volunteers stay on the website and a match can be made. In this chapter, user testing is applied to the websites of five volunteer centres. The results provide information on the usability of these specific websites. In addition, other volunteer centres are offered insight into the various problems of usability and a tool to test this.

INTRODUCTION

In 1988, the Netherlands gained access to the Internet for the first time and today access is common practice (van Hoek, 2018; Olsthoorn, 2014). In 2017, almost all Dutch households (98%) had access to the Internet and 85% had a broadband connection. The comparable average figures for Europe are 87% and 85%. The Netherlands also scores high with 87% in terms of mobile internet use in 2017. The average for Europe is 65% (CBS, 2018). 86.1% of Dutch citizens aged 12 or older used internet almost every day in 2017. In 2012 this was only 76.2% (CBS Statline, 2018b).

The widespread availability and easy accessibility of the Internet has led to an increasing digitization of activities in various areas of society. This also applies to volunteer brokerage (Stubbe & van Dijk, 2006; Ploegmakers et al., 2011; Terpstra et al., 2008). Volunteer brokerage involves "bringing together supply and demand in volunteer work" (Stubbe & van Dijk, 2006, p. 11). The supply comes from volunteers and the demand from volunteer-involving organizations. The supply of volunteers in the Netherlands is considerably. According to national research data (CBS Statline, 2018a; Smeets & Arends, 2017), half of Dutch people over the age of 15 took part in volunteering in 2016. Men and women were equally represented. Men were particularly active in organizations in the field of sports, youth, hobbies, trade unions, politics and district or neighbourhood while women were more active in schools and care organizations. The share of volunteers was highest among 35- to 45-year-olds (57%), followed by 15- to 25-year-olds (54%) and 45- to 55-year-olds (52%). The higher educated (bachelor/master, PhD) more often worked as a volunteer than the lower educated: 60-62% compared to 35%. The supply, however, lags behind demand. Many Dutch organizations that work (together) with volunteers are faced with a shortage or volunteers (Hustinx et al., 2015). The expectation is that this shortage will only increase in the coming years due to the introduction of the new Social Support Act [Wmo] in 2015. Pursuant to this law, Dutch citizens are expected (more than before) to care for family members, friends and neighbours who can no longer do so themselves. This takes time and as a result people have less time to participate in volunteering (Movisie, 2017; de Wit & Bekkers, 2017).

Volunteer centres are important providers of volunteer brokerage in the Netherlands (van Gilst et al., 2015). In the period 2008-2010, research has been done to determine how the success rate of volunteer brokerage by volunteer centres in the Netherlands can be optimized. The results showed that motivation and feelings of pride and respect on the part of the volunteer can make an important contribution to the success of volunteer brokerage and should (more explicitly) be integrated into the volunteer brokerage process (van Gilst et al.,
2011; 2015). During this investigation a third factor emerged that is related to the increasing digitization of contemporary society. This factor concerns the usability of volunteer brokerage

websites that volunteer centres are using more and more in addition to the traditional offline service they provide. When websites are not usable, there is a risk that users (potential volunteers) are discouraged and abandon the website (Gomez, 2010; Nielsen, 2012). This means that no match will be made. For this reason, an additional study has been conducted focusing on the usability of volunteer brokerage websites. The study aimed to answer three questions:

1. How can the usability of volunteer brokerage websites of volunteer centres be studied?
2. What kind of information does a usability study of the websites of volunteer centres provides?
3. How can other volunteer centres benefit from this information?

The present chapter reports on the outcomes of this study. Prior to this, the impact of digitization on volunteer brokerage is described.

IMPACT OF DIGITIZATION ON VOLUNTEER BROKERAGE

There are around 240 volunteer centres in the Netherlands (Ploegmakers et al., 2011). They offer various services of which volunteer brokerage is one of the most important ones. The first (two) volunteer centres in the Netherlands were established in the first half of the 1970's. The establishment coincides with the beginning of the era of digitization. Many digital developments have taken place since then (Table 1).

As can be derived from Table 1, hardly any digital tools were available during the early days of volunteer centres. A quality management manual published in the nineties (Heinsius, 1998), indicated that computers were at that time standard equipment of volunteer centres. The deployment of an automated system for the registration and reporting of data was promoted in the manual. Written descriptions or computer prints of volunteer vacancies were kept in binders and could be viewed by potential volunteers. Communication was done in writing, verbally and visually. E-mail and internet were not used.

In 2000 this had already changed. Most volunteer centres made use of automated systems. In addition to the binders, computers were (sometimes) used to search for volunteer vacancies. Furthermore, the use of e-mail and brokerage via the Internet were increasing (Heinsius, 2000).

Table 1: Digital Developments

Year	Digital developments	Year	Digital Developements
1971	first e-mail over a computer network	2005	YouTube (video sharing website)
1975	personal computer	2006	Facebook (social networking website) public; Twitter (news and social networking website)
1981	introduction IBM-PC for home and office use	2008	4G for mobile data traffic; breakthrough Facebook
1986	CD-ROM (data storage)	2009	breakthrough Smartphone's; WhatsApp (messaging app)
1988	CD-recordable (write once and read many times)	2010	iPad; cloud computing made public, Instagram (photo and video sharing app) public
1993	www open to companies and individuals	2011	introduction speech technology (Apple's Siri) for consumers
1995	internet explorer; e-mail becomes popular with a larger audience	2014	breakthrough VR and AR (which simulate reality or add information to reality)
1997	launch search engine Google; Wi-Fi world standard	2016	network deployment in the Netherlands for Internet of Things (network of devices connected to the internet for exchanging / collecting data)
2000	Bluetooth; digital photography	2018	handling personal data regulated by European General Data Protection Regulation
2001	BitTorrent (file sharing system); Wikipedia	2019	strong increase in use of artificial intelligence in companies; rise blockchain technology (database for transactions that is exchanged between 2 parties)
2003	Skype (voice /video calls via the Internet); LinkedIn (social networking website for professionals)	2020	test with 5G network in Europe

Source: Burgering, 2018; Gijzemijter, 2019; Sociaal-Economische Raad, 2016; KPN, 2019; Veraart, 2008

Around 2003, there were several digital systems on the market that supported the process of volunteer brokerage. Some of these systems made it possible to enter, manage and view information about volunteers, organizations and volunteer vacancies via the Internet. Other systems were minimally or inaccessible via the Internet (van Hal & Wams, 2003). Digitization of the volunteer brokerage process continued in the years thereafter. Volunteers were enabled to search for and react to volunteer vacancies directly via websites of volunteer centres. Digital (online) volunteer brokerage became more and more popular. Surveys (Stubbe & van Dijk, 2006; Ploegmakers et al., 2011; Terpstra et al., 2008) carried out in 2005, 2007 and 2010 among Dutch volunteer centres showed a shift from personal (offline) volunteer brokerage to digital brokerage. The average numbers of digital matchings per month per volunteer centre in those years were respectively 21.7, 33.3 and 86. The comparable average numbers of personal matchings per month were: 17.1, 32.9 and 45.0.

Despite the growing popularity of digital brokerage, volunteer centres continue to offer personal brokerage. The results of an online survey (van Gilst et al., 2011) among volunteer centres in the Dutch province South Holland revealed that 86% of volunteer centres offered personal brokerage as well as digital brokerage. Only one volunteer centre operated exclusively online as a broker and another one exclusively offline.

From the beginning of 2000 social media became increasingly important. Not only individuals, but also companies became more active on social media. Frequently used social media in the Netherlands are Facebook, Twitter, Hyves, YouTube and LinkedIn (Heerschap & Ortega, 2013). An inventory of the websites of the 28 volunteer centres that participated in the aforementioned online survey in South Holland (van Gilst et al., 2011), shows that especially Facebook (100%) and Twitter (75%) are often used. LinkedIn (36%) YouTube (29%) and Instagram (29%) are much less used.

It is clear that digitization has led to many changes in the daily practice of volunteer brokerage, with the biggest change being a shift in focus from offline to online volunteer brokerage.

STUDYING THE USABILITY OF VOLUNTEER BROKERAGE WEBSITES

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO, 2018, 9241-11) defines usability as “the extent to which a system, product or service can be used by specified users to achieve specified goals with effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction in a specified context of use”. Usability relates to the outcome of interacting with the system. In case of a website, it reflects the ease of using the website. Usability is an important attribute of a website. When a website

is difficult to use, people will abandon the website and may never return (Nielsen, 2012). Gomez (2010) showed that 88% of online consumers are less likely to return to a website after a bad experience.

A commonly used method to study usability is user testing. According to this method, users are asked to perform a series of representative tasks on a website without any help. The researcher only observes what happens. The users are asked to think aloud (Loranger, 2016; Nielsen, 2012). According to Nielsen (2012), an authority in the field of user testing, five users provide the best test results.
In 2016, user testing was applied to study the usability of five volunteer brokerage websites of volunteer centres. The five volunteer centres, whose websites were included in the study (Table 2), had previously participated in an online survey in the Dutch province South Holland (van Gilst et al., 2015). They are selected on the basis of three variables (Table 2). These variables are related to the size and working area of the volunteer centre and determine the supply and demand of organizations and volunteers (Ploegmakers et al., 2011).

Table 2: Characteristics of Selected Volunteer Centres

Characteristics / Volunteer centre	Number of paid employees	Self-dependent	Number of inhabitants municipality of establishment
VC1	> 5	yes	> 250,000
VC2	3 - 5	no	100,000 - 250,000
VC3	3 - 5	no	100,000 - 250,000
VC4	0 - 2	yes	20,000 - 50,000
VC5	0 - 2	no	< 20,000

Each website was tested by five different test users. The recruitment of test users started in the researchers' own network. Recruited test users were asked to identify other potential test users in their social networks. This is referred to as snowball sampling (Baarda et al., 2009). Hinderer Sova and Nielsen (2003) emphasize the importance of using representative test users, in this case potential volunteers. However, no (generalizable) information was available on this group. Therefore, gender and age of active volunteers (see Introduction) were taken into account when selecting. The recruitment of 35- to 45-year-old respondents in particular was difficult. Among the test users were 13 women and 12 men, ranging in age from 21 to 75 years. The 55- to 65-year-olds (36%) were overrepresented in the group of test users and the 35- to 45-year-olds (4%) were underrepresented in comparison with the national figures. Almost half (48%) of the test users did already volunteer.

The composition of relevant tasks (Table 3) was based on research information (van Gilst et al., 2015) about volunteer brokerage and a quick scan of the selected websites by two researchers. The tasks were presented one by one on cards.

Table 3: Test User Tasks

No.	Test user tasks
1.	You have decided to start volunteering in X (= municipality where central office volunteer centre resides). Use your own search engine to find a website that makes this possible.
2.	You have arrived on the right website. You want to read more information about the organization.
3.	You have scanned the website, but still have some questions. Find a way to contact the organization.
4 4a.	You are satisfied with the information and decide to search for an interesting volunteer job. Find a suitable job for you. Please explain why this job is suitable? What do you look for? You do not exactly know what kind of job is suitable for you. Find a way to determine what suites you? (Only for websites that provide tests.)
5. 5a.	You found a volunteer job that interests you. Apply for this job. To complete the application, you need to be logged in. Log in. It is a test. You do not have to send anything. (Only for websites with login procedure.)

After performing the tasks, test users were asked to specify their opinions on certain elements of the website on a Likert(type)-scale of 1-5. They were also asked to explain their scores. The scoring list consisted of 13 items (Table 4). The items were based on the general principles of interaction design of Nielsen (1995) and the dimensions of usability of Quesenbery (2004). Verbal comments of the test users were taped and notes were made during the tests. Comments and notes were transcribed and coded. The coding system was based on the tasks and scoring list. Coding was done by two independent researchers using Atlas.ti software (Evers, 2004). The coding results were compared and overall, most codes agreed with each other. When there were differences, they were discussed until agreement was reached. In case no consensus was reached, a third researcher would make the final decision. However, this did not occur.

Before describing the outcomes of the user tests, some limitations of the study should be noted. The generalizability of the outcomes is limited because only five volunteer brokerage websites were tested. However, the greatest value of the study lies in its exemplary function for other volunteer centres that maintain similar volunteer brokerage websites. Secondly, data was lacking on the target group, that is, potential volunteers. The composition of the test panels was therefore based on data on active volunteers. The last limitation has to do with the testers. Because this was testing and not normal circumstances, people may have acted differently or assumed socially desirable behaviour.

RESULTS USER TESTING

On all websites, test users encountered problems when performing the tasks. The most common problems per task are described. It is also indicated on which website(s) these problems occurred.

Almost all test users (88%) used similar word combinations when searching for the right website (task 1): “name of municipality” combined with “volunteer work” or “volunteer”. Especially with one website this did not lead to the intended result. This website (VC2) belonged to a volunteer centre which was part of an umbrella organization and the volunteer brokerage website was part of the website of the umbrella organization.

When looking for information about the volunteer centre (task 2) test users were especially interested in information about confidentiality, the history of the volunteer centre, what it does, and who runs it. Many test users (48%) indicated that under normal circumstances they would look immediately for volunteer vacancies and skip or postpone the search for general information. At the websites of VC1 and VC4 information on the volunteer centre was untraceable. At the other three websites, the information was limited and generally insufficient for test users.

Every website offered two or more (traditional) contact options via the main menu. All users found at least one of these options (task 3). At one website (VC1) this caused some problems, because the contact information was not in the main menu but was somewhat hidden in the footer. Calling and emailing were by far the most preferred ways for test users to get in touch. Social media like Facebook (4) and Twitter (3), which were linked to four of the five websites, were not used.

The task of finding a suitable volunteer job (task 4) revealed various problems. The first problem was finding an overview of available volunteer vacancies. This was the case with two out of five test users of the websites VC1, VC2 and VC5. Secondly, the search process at one website (VC5) was complicated by the lack of tools to search the list of available volunteer vacancies. Test users had to scroll the whole list (± 75) to find a vacancy of their choice. Users of the other four websites could search using category/keyword functionalities. At another website (VC4) the search process was complicated by a lack of volunteer vacancies. At one point in time only two vacancies were available. Finally, some test users had problems with the description of the vacancies. Information on the target group/person and time investment was missed at three (VC1, VC3, VC4) and one website (VC5) respectively.

Two of the five websites (VC1, VC5) provided one or more tests to help people determine which volunteer job suits them. Users had difficulty finding these tests (task 4a). The tests offered were: a talent scan, a test for young people, and a test for activities in the care sector. A criticism with regard to the talent scan on website VC5 was that the test results were not directly linked to the available volunteer job opportunities.

Problems that arose during the application (task 5) at two websites (VC1, VC3) could be traced back to an unclear or confusing explanation of the procedure. Nevertheless, all users were able to complete the application process.

The Likert(type)-scale scores of elements of the website were generally high (Table 4). At least 60% of the test users gave a score of 4 or 5. This percentage was even higher, 80% or more, at elements such as colours, contrast, feasibility of interaction, appropriateness and engagement. Score 1 was not given at all. Score 2 was given occasionally for ease of use (VC2), terms and grouping (VC3, VC4, VC5), contrast (VC2), layout (VC2), readability (VC2), appropriateness (VC5), ease of learning (VC3, VC4), engagement (VC2, VC4), and efficiency (VC1, VC3). In their comments, test users regularly (36%) attributed their low scores to the comprehensibility of words in navigation menus and on pages.
Error tolerance was not taken into account in the overall consideration of the scores because only test users (6) who had an error message were asked to give a score for error tolerance. Error messages occurred on three websites (VC1, VC2, VC4). Half of the error tolerance scores were low. This had to do with the fact that no solutions were offered to correct the error.

Table 4: Scoring List and Test Users' Scores

Scoring list	Questions	VC1 scores	VC2 scores	VC3 scores	VC4 scores	VC5 scores
Based on general principles of interaction design of Nielsen (1995)						
Ease of use	Do you find the navigation of the website easy to use?	4, 4, 5, 4, 5	5, 3, **2**, 5, 5	4, 3, 3, 5, 4	4, 4, 4, 3, 4	5, 4, 3, 4, 3
Terms & grouping	Do you find the terms and groups on the website clear?	4, 4, 4, 5, 3	4, 5, 3, 3, 5	4, 3, **2**, 5, 3	3, 5, 4, **2**, 4	4, 5, 5, 5, **2**
Colours	What do you think of the colours used on the website?	4, 5, 4, 5, 5	5, 4, 4, 3, 5	4, 4, 5, 4, 5	4, -, 4, 4, 4	4, 4, 4, 5, 3
Contrast	What do you think of the contrast on the website?	4, 5, 4, 5, 5	5, **2**, 3, 4, 4	5, 4, 4, 5, 4	4, 5, 3, 4, 4	4, 5, 4, 5, 3
Layout	What do you think of the layout of the website?	4, 5, 5, 3, 3	4, 3, **2**, 4, 5	4, 3, 3, 5, 4	4, 4, 4, 3, 4	5, 4, 3, 5, 4
Visibility interactions	Are the website's interactions (buttons, URL-links, texts, and such) clearly visible?	4, 3, 5, 5, 3	4, 3, 5, 5, 5	4, 4, 4, 5, 4	4, 5, 4, 4, 3	3, 3, 4, 5, 4
Feasibility interactions	Is it clear what is interactive, how to do the action and when it is completed?	-, 5, 5, 5, 4	4, 5, 5, 5, -	5, 3, 5, 5, 4	3, -, 3, 5, 4	4, 5, 5, 5, 4
Readability	Do you find the website readable?	4, 5, 3, 5, 4	5, **2**, 4, 4, 5	3, 3, 3, 5, 4	3, 5, 3, 4, 3	5, 5, 5, 5, 4
Appropriateness	Do you find the texts appropriate for the website?	4, 4, 5, 5, 5	-, 5, 4, 5, 3	5, 4, 3, 5, 4	3, 5, 4, 4, 4	**2**, 4, 4, 5, 3
Based on usability dimensions of Quesenbery (2004)						
Ease of learning	Did you need to learn new things to understand the website? With other words: Can you use the website better on a second visit?	4, 4, 5, 4, 4	4, 5, 3, 3, 4	4, **2**, 4, 5, 3	4, -, **2**, 3, 4	5, 4, 4, 4, 3
Engagement	Do you like to use the website?	4, 4, 4, 5, 4	5, 3, 4, **2**, 5	4, 4, 4, 5, 4	4, 4, 3, **2**, 4	5, 4, 4, 5, 4
Efficiency	Does the website contribute to the efficient completion of the tasks?	**2**, 5, 5, 5, 3	5, 5, 4, 3, 5	5, 4, **2**, 5, 3	4, -, 3, 3, 4	5, 4, 4, 4, 3
Error tolerance	Does the website help to resolve or prevent errors?	-, -, -, 3, -	-, -, -, **2**, 4	-, -, -, -, -	**1**, -, -, **2**, 4	-, -, -, -, -

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

For more than four decades, volunteer centres in the Netherlands offer the service of volunteer brokerage. During this period digitization developed. This has resulted in the expansion of brokerage opportunities and a shift from offline (personal) to online volunteer brokerage via a website.

Usability is important for the success of a website and it can be evaluated through user testing. User testing was applied to measure the usability of five volunteer brokerage websites of volunteer centres. These websites were each subjected to a test by five users. The results showed that test users of these websites encountered various problems while performing the user tasks. There were problems on every website. The problems that were mentioned by test users had to do with either the structure or the content of the website. General structural problems included poor findability of items and lack of appropriate tools, among other things. No/insufficient information and inadequate supply of volunteer vacancies are examples of content problems that test users often encountered. In addition to the general problems, there were also many specific problems that were related to one specific website or test user. By tackling the problems, the websites will become considerably more usable for users in general. This will reduce the chance of users leaving the website and being lost as volunteers.

For other volunteer centres the results of the user tests imply that usability is not a matter of course and that it is worthwhile to test their own websites. By means of the user tests insight is provided into the kind of problems users of similar websites encountered while looking for volunteer opportunities. Other volunteer centres can use this insight to critically consider their own websites and (possibly) make adaptations. The test results can also be an incentive for other volunteer centres to study the usability of their own websites. With user testing, a method is provided to do so.
It is recommended to perform user tests regularly because a website is constantly changing. The structure and in particular its content are constantly changing. Most volunteer centres probably will not have the knowledge and experience to carry out user tests themselves. They can outsource it to a professional company. However, this is a costly affair. An alternative is to recruit an expert volunteer for testing. Collaboration can also be sought with a technical college/university and let students carry out user tests.

A somewhat remarkable result of the tests was that users did not use the social media available on four websites when searching for contact options. Users preferred traditional contact options. It is interesting to do further research on this, in order to make optimal use of these media.

In addition, it is also interesting to investigate to what extent improvement of usability leads to an increase of matches.

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CHAPTER 6

Volunteer brokerage in perspective: the changing role of volunteer centres as volunteer brokers in the Netherlands

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ABSTRACT

Volunteer brokerage has always been an important if not the most important part of the services provided by volunteer centres in the Netherlands. Over the past decade, volunteer centres have had to deal with a number of developments: increasing digitization, the introduction of the Social Support Act 2015 and the Participation Act, a changing volunteer market and the emergence of new brokerage initiatives. Based on literature research and interviews with experts, this chapter examines what these developments mean for the current and future direction of volunteer centres as brokers.

INTRODUCTION

The Netherlands has an extensive network of volunteer centres, which are often (partly) subsidized by the municipalities in which they are located. They offer support to volunteering on a local level. The support activities are diverse and can be divided into five basic functions, namely: translation of social developments, connection and facilitation, strengthening of volunteers and volunteer organizations, propagation and anchorage. These functions are based on the Basic Functions of Local Support for Volunteering and Informal Care formulated by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS, 2009), which offer a helping hand in setting up local support for voluntary work (van Dam et al., 2009; Ploegmakers et al., 2011).

Volunteer brokerage is part of the basic function of connection and facilitation. It is an important, if not the most important, activity for many volunteer centres (Movisie, 2014). According to Ploegmakers et al. (2011), many volunteer centres even derive their right to exist from this. Volunteer brokerage stands for bringing together the supply of and demand for volunteers on the volunteer market (Stubbe & van Dijk, 2006). Many civil society organizations, especially in the care sector, need volunteers to function properly. However, the supply of volunteers is limited and for a number of years shortages have been experienced to an increasing extent (Grootegoed et al., 2017). Brokerage by volunteer centres can contribute to a solution (van Gilst et al., 2015).

There have been several developments over the last decade which have influenced, directly or indirectly, the role of volunteer centres and prompted reflection on the future direction of volunteer brokerage by volunteer centres. On the basis of a literature review, this chapter sketches a picture of four important developments. These developments concern: the increasing digitalization of society, the introduction of the new Social Support Act [Wmo] and the Participation Act, a changing volunteer market and the emergence of new brokerage initiatives. Subsequently, with the help of experts' input, what these developments mean for the current and future practice of volunteer brokerage by volunteer centres will be investigated. The chapter concludes with a reflection on the described findings.

DIGITIZATION

Digitization has taken off in recent years. Digital technologies and applications are an integral part of today's society (VSNU, 2016). Volunteer centres also make use of this in their brokerage function. The use of digital means of communication, for example, has become more widespread. In addition to e-mail and contact forms, volunteer centres are making

increasing use of social media. They are mainly active on Facebook and Twitter and to a lesser extent on Instagram and LinkedIn (van Gilst et al., 2020).

Digitization is also visible in the forms of data that is used. Important data collections in volunteer brokerage include: volunteers, vacancies, volunteer organizations and brokerage results. These data collections have been digitized and are processed and edited with the help of computers. Different systems exist to support this process. These systems can be specially developed for the volunteer market but can also be 'borrowed' from the labour market, according to a field study among volunteer centres carried out between 2008 and 2011 (van Gilst et al., 2015). At the time of the research RegiPro, FreeForce, Adsysco and Otys (for professional recruitment) were used. An important development in recent years is the emergence of Software as a Service or SaaS (ICT.Portal, 2019). Volunteer centres no longer need to purchase the software themselves, but can obtain (online) access by entering into a contract with a SaaS provider. An example of this is the tool Fenna (Vrijwilligersaanzet, 2018).

Furthermore, digitization is reflected in the procedures that are followed. In addition to offline brokerage, volunteer centres now also offer the possibility of online brokerage. In this case, brokerage is carried out via the website of the volunteer centre and not in personal contact with volunteer centre employees. In principle, volunteers go through the brokerage process independently. However, contact options are offered on the website if there is a need for personal contact with a volunteer centre employee for information or support (van Gilst et al., 2020).

Online brokerage is on the rise. A study carried out by Movisie (Ploegmakers et al., 2011) showed that in 2011 the average number of online mediations at volunteer centres was almost twice as high as the number of offline mediations, 86.0 versus 45.0. In previous measurements this difference was considerably smaller, namely 33.3 versus 32.9 in 2007 and 21.7 versus 17.1 in 2005 (Ploegmakers et al., 2011). Unfortunately, no up-to-date data is available. It is not known what the current figures are or what this means for the fulfilment of the brokerage function. However, on the basis of a recent study on municipal volunteering policy (van de Gast et al., 2018), it can be concluded that volunteer brokerage has started to play a less prominent role for a number of, mainly larger, volunteer centres. Over the last five years, these centres have developed into local centres of expertise for volunteering. In addition to volunteering, volunteering promotion, increasing expertise and counselling, they advise municipalities on volunteering policies at a strategic level.

THE SOCIAL SUPPORT ACT AND THE PARTICIPATION ACT

The new Social Support Act came into force on 1st January 2015. It replaces the old Social Support Act from 2007. The aspects of participation and the self-reliance of people are central to a greater degree. Municipalities are implementing the Act. Together with the Long-term Care Act, the Healthcare Insurance and the Youth Act, the Social Support Act is part of the health care system in the Netherlands (VWS, 2016). The aim of the Social Support Act is to allow people to live independently and participate in society for as long as possible. For some groups of people this is a greater challenge than for others, as in the case of the elderly, the chronically ill and people with a physical, mental or intellectual disability. In the case of limitations in self-reliance and participation, personal strengths of those people, the informal care system and general facilities are called upon in the first instance. If this does not suffice, additional professional support is arranged. Ultimately, this should lead to a care offer tailored to the individual (van Deth et al., 2016; van der Lans, 2017; VWS, 2016). Volunteers are part of the informal care system together with informal caregivers (van Rijn, 2016).

The Netherlands Institute for Social Research [SCP] recently carried out research into the local implementation of the Social Support Act 2015 (van den Berg, 2018). The study included a national survey among municipalities and interviews with involved implementers in six municipalities. The research shows that volunteers are used for a variety of activities. In the case study municipalities, for example, volunteers are often used for: meetings, providing food, educational activities, exercise, providing shelter and daytime activities. Volunteers are also active in grocery services, transport and household chores. In addition, there is voluntary action in voluntary respite care and prevention programs against loneliness. The results of a previous SCP survey (Schyns, 2015) indicate that offering companionship or emotional support (61%), supervising activities (41%) and offering transport (30%) are among the three main activities of volunteers in care and support. It is clear that volunteers are very important in the implementation of the Social Support Act. Partly because of this, an increasing demand for volunteers is observed in practice (van den Berg, 2018). This comes on top of the existing volunteer shortages that volunteer organizations have been struggling with for years (van Gilst et al., 2011).

At the same time as the Social Support Act, the Participation Act came into force. This law, like the Social Support Act, is implemented by the municipality. The Participation Act combines the Social Employment Act, the Social Assistance Act and the Work and Employment Support for Young Disabled Persons Act. The aim of the Act is to reintegrate as many people as possible, with and without disabilities, into the paid labour market. People who do not have sufficient income or equity to provide for themselves can obtain a social assistance benefit through the Participation Act. However, they must make an effort to find

paid work (again) as soon as possible. Volunteering can be a stepping stone in making this possible. Municipalities attach strict rules to volunteering with a social assistance benefit. For example, voluntary work should not stand in the way of paid work and should not reduce opportunities for paid work. Nor should benefit recipients be allowed to do work for which a person without benefits would be paid. As soon as a suitable paid job is found, volunteer work during working hours should be stopped immediately (Participatienieuws.nl, 2019; Rijksoverheid.nl, 2020). Beneficiaries can engage in volunteering in different ways. One way is through volunteer brokerage by a volunteer centre after referral by the municipality (Lub, 2017).

THE VOLUNTEER MARKET

A worrying development is that after years of stable volunteer action, there appears to have been a decline in the number of volunteers in recent years. In its biennial research project [Giving in the Netherlands [GiN], VU Amsterdam discuss a gradually decreasing trend in the number of adults who volunteer (de Wit & Bekkers, 2017). The estimates for 2010, 2012, 2014 and 2016 were 41%, 38%, 37% and 36% respectively. The average number of hours that people spend on volunteering per month is also decreasing. In 2010 this was 19 hours, in 2012 it was 21 hours, whereas in 2014 and 2016, this decreased to 18 and 14.5 hours, respectively (Bekkers et al., 2015; de Wit & Bekkers, 2017). Bekkers et al. (2015) attribute this decrease in number and hours to the increasing demand made by the government on citizens to provide informal assistance in their immediate surroundings. This is at the expense of volunteering.

Other studies paint a less negative picture. Van Houwelingen and Dekker (2018) of the SCP call the number of volunteers in the Netherlands fairly stable. In the past ten years this has fluctuated between 25 and 30%. They do see an increase in the percentage of people offering informal help, from 23% in 2008 to 27% in 2018. Informal help is defined as: “free help to sick or disabled family members, acquaintances or neighbours” (van Houwelingen & Dekker, 2018, p. 63). Also, according to Statistics Netherlands [CBS], the proportion of volunteers remains constant (Arends & Schmeets, 2018). They arrive at 49% for the period 2012-2016. The SCP (Kuyper et al., 2019) sees a fairly stable picture in terms of hours of voluntary work as well. Hetem (2020) concludes in an analysis of CBS figures that the same applies to the CBS. It should be noted that comparison between the various studies is difficult due to differences in design and research methods (Hetem & Franken, 2017; de Wit & Bekkers, 2017). However, it can be concluded that in the GiN project, data on volunteering has been collected in the same way and from the same target group since 2010 (Hetem & Franken, 2017).

Partly from the influence of the Social Support Act and the Participation Act, there is an increase in diversity in the volunteer market. This concerns both the demand for and the supply of volunteers. Regarding the supply side, several new groups of volunteers have entered the volunteer market in recent years. These are employee volunteers, volunteers with a disability and guided volunteers (Kennisplein Zorg voor Beter, 2019). Table 1 provides an overview.

Table 1. New volunteer groups

Groups	Subgroups	Encouraged/obliged by
Employee volunteers	Employees	Companies
Volunteers with a disability	People with a physical or mental disability	Organization (or own initiative)
Guided volunteers	Secondary school students	Secondary schools
	Participants reintegration process People on social assistance benefit People with work disability Refugees	Local government
	People with community service	Probation service

(Inspired by: Kennisplein Zorg voor Beter, 2019)

Employee volunteers are employees of companies who, in the context of corporate social responsibility [MBO], are encouraged to do voluntary work during working hours. MBO stands for free (voluntary) investment of expertise, manpower, facilities and networks by companies in the local community (MVO Nederland, 2019). The group of volunteers with disabilities concerns people with physical or mental disabilities who volunteer. They do this on their own initiative or are encouraged to do so by an organization (Hofman 2017; de Putter & Meulenkamp, 2016). In the case of guided volunteers, a distinction can be made between people who are encouraged or obliged to volunteer through secondary schools, local government or a probation service. In this way, as part of a social traineeship, young people are encouraged by secondary schools to volunteer between 10 to 30 hours for society (Inspectie van het Onderwijs, 2016). People who take part in a reintegration program after long-term illness or unemployment have the option of volunteering during their reintegration into the labour market, provided that it does not stand in the way of paid work (Kennisplein Zorg voor Beter, 2019). People on social assistance benefits may be obliged by their municipality from the 1st January 2015 to do unpaid work as compensation (Rijksoverheid, 2019; Vrijwilligerswerk.nl, 2019; Kennisplein Zorg voor Beter, 2019). In some municipalities, refugees are required to do voluntary work in addition to their integration course. Whereas, in other municipalities this is only permitted and supported if the integration course has been successfully completed (Kahman et al., 2018). People with a work disability are offered

voluntary work as an alternative to sheltered work by some municipalities (Inspectie SWZ, 2016). People with community service must perform voluntary work within the framework of the sentence imposed (Zorg Beter met Vrijwilligers, 2019).

In addition to greater diversity, there are also demographic shifts. According to CBS (Arends & Schmeets, 2018), low-skilled people who have only received primary education do considerably less voluntary work (30.5%) than those with a higher education at a masters or doctorate level (58.2%), or with a higher professional education, bachelor level (58.9%). A similar difference can be found in the Social State of the Netherlands (Houwelingen & Dekker, 2018). It also points out that the differences in voluntary work participation between the low and highly educated seems to have increased over the past ten years. The same would apply to the difference between young and old. Young adults (18-34 years) are increasingly less active as volunteers than those aged 35-64 and those over 65. Recent figures from CBS (Arends & Schmeets, 2018) show a more positive image of young people. However, CBS uses different age categories than the Social State of the Netherlands. According to the CBS, the percentage of volunteers is highest among 35 to 45 year olds (59.4%), followed by 15 to 25 year olds (49.5%). No statements are made by CBS about the development over time.

On the demand side, various changes have also occurred in recent years. Inspired by the wishes and needs of the supply side, volunteering has become more flexible and without obligation. In addition to the traditional voluntary work in a formal context for a foundation or a club, volunteers can choose from a range of less intensive activities in loose(r) contexts. Examples are doing voluntary work as a one-off job for a day or part of a day, during holidays, on a date, in a family context, during working hours, online, as a return service, within small-scale citizen initiatives or in the local neighbourhood (van Dam et al., 2009; Franken, 2014; Klein et al., 2013; Movisie, 2014, 2019; Versteegen, 2012). In addition, the demand for volunteers no longer only comes from organizations, as shown in recent research by SCP (van den Berg, 2018) into the local implementation practice of the Social Support Act 2015 in six case municipalities. The study has brought to the fore a number of current shifts in volunteering. A relevant shift in this context concerns that of voluntary work in a club to voluntary support for individual requests for help, as one-on-one support. A shift from volunteering to districts and neighbourhoods is also mentioned. A number of case municipalities encourage such a shift in support of social neighbourhood teams and youth and family teams. According to Daru et al. (2015), municipalities are increasingly requesting volunteer centres to also mediate between individuals who need help and volunteers, in addition to their regular brokerage activities for organizations. Few volunteer centres are responding to this request. When they do, this is usually done through a volunteer organization that submits a vacancy for a volunteer to the volunteer centre. However, volunteer centres are willing to take on an advisory role and

inform individuals who ask or provide help about possible risks associated with one-to-one brokerage (Daru et al., 2015).

NEW BROKERAGE INITIATIVES

Volunteer centres have a long history as brokers between supply and demand on the volunteer market (van den Bos, 2014; Heinsius, 1998). They operate externally or independently, in the sense that there is no direct relationship with the requesting and offering parties. Research by van Gilst et al. (2011) shows that in 2011 volunteer centres still played a central role as external mediators. This situation has changed in 2019, whereby other (new) parties are also active as external brokers in the volunteer market. Like volunteer centres, these new brokers focus on bringing together supply and demand for voluntary action. Contrary to volunteer centres, the demand does not come from organizations, but mainly from individuals. However, there are exceptions, such as in the case of NLforeachother, where organizations that ask for or offer voluntary help can also make use of the platform. Another important distinction is the fulfilment of the role of broker. Whereas volunteer centres play an active role as brokers, new brokers facilitate more. They offer or support a platform for the direct exchange of voluntary services between individuals who ask or provide help with no or minimal involvement in the brokerage process. The exchange initially takes place online, but in some cases also by telephone, via a social broker or within the informal setting of a café. A social broker connects care, welfare and neighbourhood initiatives (van Bochhove et al., 2014; Bredewold & Malda, 2014; van Gilst et al., 2015; Haarlem.buuv.nu, 2020; Hiphelpt.nl, 2020; van der Klauw & van Egmond, 2018; NLvoorelkaar, 2020; Venema, 2018; Wehelpen.nl, 2020). Table 2 gives examples of some new brokerage initiatives.

Table 2. Examples of new brokerage initiatives

Name	Procedure	Working area
Neighbour assistance centre [Burenhulpcentrale]	Through a website or telephone system, the Neighbour assistance centre links local residents with a specific request for help to local residents who have registered to offer help.	Local
NEIGHBOUR [BUUV]	NEIGHBOUR is an online neighbourhood marketplace and focuses on services that residents can do for each other without having anything in return.	Local
Deedmob	Deedmob is an online platform that connects volunteers, social organizations, companies and government institutions.	Nationwide / local
Helpinpractice [Hulpindepraktijk]	Helpinpractice is a community-based church voluntary work. Asking and offering help is done through a website. Local helpdesks bring supply and demand together.	Local
NLforeachother [NLvoorelkaar]	NLforeachother is a nationwide umbrella organization. Individuals and (volunteer) organizations or associations can request or offer help via an online platform	Nationwide / local
Timeforeachother [Tijdvoorelkaar]	Timeforeachother is a neighbourhood-oriented method for the activation of residents. The main objective is to build up social networks in quarters or neighbourhoods. By means of a website and a social broker, local residents can inform each other about supply and demand.	Local
Askeachother [Vraagelkaar]	Askeachother brings people together who want to mean something to each other. This happens through a website and cafes.	Local
WeHelp [WeHelpen]	WeHelp stimulates offering help and helping each other. Through a website people can ask for help, offer help or create/manage a help network.	Local

(van Bochhove et al., 2014; Bredewold & Malda, 2014; Haarlem.buuv.nu, 2020; Hiphelpt.nl, 2020; NLvoorelkaar, 2020; Venema, 2018; Wehelpen.nl, 2020)

EXPERT OPINIONS

Following the literature review, experts were interviewed. The aim of the interviews was to find out whether the developments outlined earlier in the literature are in line with the findings of experts in the field and what they think this implies for the future brokerage role of volunteer centres. The interviews targeted a broad representation of experts. Individuals who were well-informed from various fields and organizations about the volunteer market and volunteer brokerage by volunteer centres were sought. As a result, in addition to practical

professionals, policy makers, advocates and a researcher were approached. Among the practitioners are representatives of the largest new online platform for volunteer brokerage and three volunteer centres. The three volunteer centres were selected in consultation with the Association of Dutch Voluntary Organizations [NOV]. The NOV represents the interests of volunteer centres, among others. The three volunteer centres differ in terms of their role as brokers and the number of inhabitants of the municipality in which they are located. Table 3 gives an overview of the work organizations and positions of the interviewed experts. One of the experts approached, who was connected to a network of local authorities, did not respond to the invitation. Another expert refused to participate because of the imminent closure of the volunteer centre the expert was associated with. A total of 8 open interviews with 9 experts took place. In one case there was a double interview with 2 experts from the same work organization. With the experts' permission, the interviews were recorded, transcribed, processed, and analysed using Atlas.ti. The experts also gave explicit permission for the way in which they are referred to when describing the results of the expert interviews. It should be noted that the interview findings should be interpreted and generalized with some caution, because it concerns the opinions of only a small group of experts. However, they do broadly reflect the knowledge and expertise regarding volunteer brokerage and volunteer centres in the Netherlands.

Digitalization

A current development that experts endorse is the increasing importance of online volunteer brokerage. It has been observed (E1, E2, E3, E7) that volunteer centres are increasingly not building and maintaining their own online brokerage platform, but are using external platforms, such as the NLforeachother platform. According to NLforeachother's expert (E2), this platform is currently used in 50 municipalities, where it forms the digital section of the volunteer centres. This expert notes that working with NLforeachother results in an organizational change among users. The number of administrative tasks is greatly reduced by using the platform (between 50-80%), so that (volunteer) employees can be deployed differently. Sometimes it also means saying goodbye to people "when someone just wants to do that". However, there are also volunteer centres that want to build and manage their own online platform (E2, E5b). These are mainly volunteer centres in larger municipalities with a sufficient budget. One of the three volunteer centres involved in the current study is affiliated with NLforeachother. A second volunteer centre is working with a self-developed platform and is considering its renewal. The third volunteer centre uses the volunteer tool Fenna.

Table 3. Work organizations and positions of experts

Expert	Position	Work organization
E1	Senior organizational consultant Owner	Movisie: national knowledge institute for a coherent approach to social issues Nomade Training en Advies [Nomade Training and Consultancy]: development and guidance of social organizations
E2	Marketing manager	NLvoorelkaar [NLforeachother]: national online platform for voluntary action
E3	Project leader and community manager	Vereniging Nederlandse Organisaties Vrijwilligerswerk [Association of Dutch Volunteer Organizations]: interest group for volunteering in the Netherlands
E4	Researcher / scientific assistant	Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau [The Netherlands Institute for Social Research]: part of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport: interdepartmental, scientific institute that conducts social science research
E5a E5b	Director Program manager of voluntary action	Participatie Emancipatie Professionals [Participation Emancipation Professionals]: knowledge centre for organizations in The Hague
E6	Coordinator knowledge centre	Stichting Welzijn Capelle [Capelle Welfare Foundation], Volunteer Information Point
E7	Team coordinator of voluntary action	Vitis Welzijn Vrijwillige Inzet [Vitis Welfare Voluntary Action]: expertise centre for voluntary action in Westland and Hoek van Holland
E8	Coordinator of social domain and national volunteering policy	Directie Maatschappelijke Ondersteuning Minsterie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport [Department of Social Support Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport]

A specific part of online brokerage is brokerage between individuals or one-to-one brokerage. The volunteer centre with which experts 5a and 5b are affiliated facilitates a separate platform for neighbour assistance that is maintained by a welfare organization. For the volunteer centres to which experts 6 and 7 are connected, one-to-one brokerage is possible via the general brokerage platform.

Online volunteer brokerage is also becoming more and more mobile. Expert 7 found when analysing the website data of the volunteer centre with which this expert is affiliated, that 40% of the visitors use a mobile phone. In addition, the tablet is another commonly used device. As the expert puts it: “It used to be really behind the computer and now it’s increasingly also the tablet and the phone”.

An important theme in online brokerage is the degree of intervention in the brokerage process by employees of the volunteer centre. According to expert 3, not intervening implies that volunteer centres must let go of part of their role as brokers. The volunteer centre to which E6 is linked has consciously opted for partial intervention. Employees of the volunteer centre always first enter into a discussion with new organizations that want to post vacancies on the website. If these organizations have been approved, they can add vacancies independently. Employees also intervene in the brokerage process in the case of one-to-one brokerage. Expert 3 points in this context to the possibility of "quality control" of the match in the event of intervention by the volunteer centre. The volunteer centre to which expert 7 is affiliated has opted for a more indirect role in online brokerage. Among other things, it promotes the website and trains civil society organizations and (vulnerable) volunteers. For example, the volunteer centre trains volunteer coordinators connected to organizations in holding intake interviews and on the placement and training of volunteers. Volunteers can take part in a course where they learn volunteer skills in eight meetings and find out what type of organization they want to work for.

Despite the increasing importance of online brokerage, the majority of experts (E3, E5, E6, E7, E8) continue to see offline brokerage as "valuable", in the words of expert 8. This has to do with the fact that certain groups of people are less able to navigate a digital sphere and need guidance in finding voluntary work. Example groups consist of: lower educated people, people with a language barrier and people with special needs. A lot of time goes into this guidance, according to expert 6. There will also always be people who "just want attention" or "who prefer a one-to-one conversation", according to experts 5a and 5b. Depending on the set-up of the volunteer centre, individual coaching is provided by voluntary employees (E6), voluntary coaches (E7) or outsourced to intermediaries (E5) of a welfare organization with which there is close cooperation. At the volunteer centres of experts 5a/5b and expert 7, personal guidance is decentralized to respectively 17 volunteer points and 11 villages. Not only for certain groups but also for certain functions, offline brokerage works better according to expert 5b. He mentions board positions as an example. A personal network approach appears to have more effect in this circumstance.

In addition to personal guidance, volunteer centres organize offline volunteering projects for different target groups (E3, E6, E7). This is often done in consultation with municipalities. For example, there are projects for refugees, asylum permit holders, benefit recipients who are obliged to do unpaid work as compensation and projects for young people in the context of a social internship, voluntary traineeship or social service. At the E6 volunteer centre, projects for refugees and asylum permit holders are not directly covered by brokerage, but are considered as "ancillary projects". However, there is "cross-fertilization" in the sense that people can be individually mediated into volunteering after the completion of a project.

Expert 3 observes that some municipalities "cut back on hours for personal contact" and "put a lot of effort into digital". This means that "the expertise of matching ... is thrown overboard, while it really is a separate profession". According to this expert, this has to do with cutbacks in welfare, and therefore also in volunteer centres within these municipalities.

The Social Support Act and the Participation Act

On the basis of own research findings, expert 4 points out that the introduction of the Social Support Act and the Participation Act has led to the fact that "the aim of voluntary action, both activating and supporting people, has become more important as an objective" for municipalities. According to expert 1, however, voluntary action is approached too "functionally". Municipalities are increasingly aiming to reduce health care costs by using volunteers or by allowing groups that cannot come along through volunteering to participate. Volunteer centres are affected by municipal policy as it is at odds with what they advocate. They are often broadly oriented and promote volunteering as a value in itself. In addition, volunteer centres are financially dependent on municipalities. As a result, "this broad function in society ... is more difficult to sustain".

As a result of the current legislation, new groups are also involved in volunteering, expert 3 states. This is visible in the many projects organized by volunteer centres for different target groups. The expert mentions, among others, people on social assistance benefits and asylum permit holders. Furthermore, under the influence of the Social Support Act and the Participation Act, the number of informal caregivers has increased, according to experts 5a and 5b. In the city where they work, this number has risen to 95,000 informal caregivers in 2019. This puts pressure on the availability of people as volunteers.

Expert 6 experiences that the volunteer centre is used by the municipality as "a kind of container for all questions that people do not know the answers to". Together with the municipality, a solution is being sought.

Volunteer market

A possible decline in volunteers, as reported in the latest research report from GiN (de Wit & Bekkers, 2017), has been discussed with the experts. A number of them (E5a/b, E6, E8) confirm this picture. Experts 5a and 5b, as well as GiN, relate the reduced voluntary action to the increasing appeal that is made to individuals to perform informal care. They see that people have to make choices between, for example, offering informal care to a parent or volunteering at their child's hockey club. As a solution to such a dilemma, people sometimes choose to 'buy off' volunteer tasks. Expert 6 endorses this and also sees that people have to give up their voluntary work because of informal care. This is especially the case for people

between 50-60 years of age. The same people sometimes call on volunteers themselves, because they are not managing on their own.

Contrary to GiN, the CBS states that there is not a decline in the number of volunteers. Expert 8 expects, however, that the figures from CBS will also reflect this significant decrease in the number of volunteers in 1 to 2 years' time, as there is already a slight, albeit not significant, decrease. To put this into perspective, the expert notes that "the Netherlands is still number one in Europe when it comes to voluntary action".
Expert 1 observes that the number of volunteers is decreasing, particularly in the care sector. There is also a decrease in the number of people doing long-term voluntary work and in the number of hours people volunteer. According to him, shortages do not arise "because fewer people volunteer, but because they behave differently as volunteers". Expert 7 sees a decrease in the number of volunteers registered with civil society organizations. He doesn't want to link that to the decline in voluntary action. According to him, this is "[the result of] an increase in individualization. You no longer belong to the sports club, you no longer belong to the church, but you are process-related connected to an organization and sometimes you are registered there and sometimes you are not". According to him, this tendency also continues to "do something for your neighbours". This makes measuring voluntary action complex. The same goes for defining volunteering. Expert 4 sees a blurring of boundaries between volunteer and client, while experts 6 and 8 mention the convergence of volunteer and informal caregiver.
Based on research findings of fellow researchers, expert 4 speaks of a stable picture with a slight decrease in the share of neighbour help and support. The expert finds this strange and would have expected otherwise because these are "the things that are needed to make people live longer at home and where so much effort is put into". Although expert 3 has not observed any signs of a decrease in the number of volunteers, the expert does think that "volunteering has more competition from other activities".

In order to continue to meet the demand for volunteers, volunteer centres try to reach new target groups. The volunteer centre to which expert 6 is attached to explicitly focuses on recruiting people who want to volunteer once or for a short period of time. These people are referred to as butterflies: "volunteers fluttering from task to task or from organization to organization". During a recent volunteer fair, a so-called Butterfly Garden was set up especially for this target group "with plants, flowers and butterflies (not really of course) and the vacancies". The vacancies include, for example: hanging Christmas decorations in December or assisting on days out for the disabled and elderly.
The volunteer centre to which experts 5a and 5b are attached also focuses on informal caregivers as a target group for voluntary work. Previous research ('S Jongers, 2017) shows that informal caregivers can benefit from volunteering.

New brokerage initiatives

The new brokerage platform NLforeachother has been active since 2011 and is one of the forerunners, says expert 2 who is connected to this platform. Since then, many other online brokerage platforms have been added. According to expert 1, these are technically better and easier to use than the platforms set up by volunteer centres. They also focus on other volunteers, for example, targeting the "modern generations" who initially search online. The vacancies offered are often "buddy-like positions", according to expert 3, with the exception of NLforeachother. Specifically, with regards to NLforeachother, this expert finds it positive that thought is given "to new target groups, for example employee volunteering, and offering voluntary work for groups".

Expert 2 states that NLforeachother, WeHelp, NEIGHBOUR and Deedmob are currently "the bigger national players". The expert sees that 'the market is consolidating'. Smaller brokerage initiatives fail because of the large time and money investment required to set up and maintain such a platform. Larger initiatives are considering their future. They talk to each other about "who has their own added value" and who must continue to exist independently or together with others. This has resulted in a cooperation between NLforeachother and NEIGHBOUR. NLforeachother supplies the technical part to NEIGHBOUR. NEIGHBOUR retains its own concept and identity. Possibly this cooperation will deepen in the future (expert 2, personal communication, January 2, 2020).

As indicated earlier, many (50) volunteer centres use the NLforeachother platform for their online brokerage service. According to expert 5b, this mainly concerns "somewhat smaller municipalities". He states that larger municipalities need more customization and that this is "not always feasible" for NLforeachother. "They can offer a single platform for everyone". Expert 3 also mentions the lack of "full customization". The expert sees, however, that NLforeachother is developing rapidly so that the questions of the volunteer centres can (largely) be answered in the future.

Future developments

An important development that has already been set in motion is the outsourcing of the online brokerage function. An increasing number of volunteer centres are collaborating with other (new) providers to manage and maintain their online brokerage platforms. NLforeachother is an important partner for volunteer centres in this respect (E1, E2, E3, E7). These new providers are, in turn, considering their position in the volunteer market. It seems that the smaller providers will disappear in the coming years and the larger providers will grow together or specialize (E2).

Future development components in the field of online volunteer brokerage are customer journey (E5a) and web care (E7). Customer journey is "an analysis and improvement method with

which an organization systematically delves into the functional and emotional experience of the customer" (Slooten et al., 2018, p. 24). As expert 5a indicates, it focuses on: "How is someone going to search? What will happen? What is needed to stimulate or value someone positively?" Web care is a company's policy to actively respond to statements about that company on social media (Encyclo.nl, 2019). The volunteer centre to which expert 7 is affiliated has hired an intern to investigate the application possibilities of web care for the volunteer centre.

For the time being, volunteer centres keep offline brokerage in their own hands and also see a future in this (E2, E3, E5, E6, E7, E8). Expert 8 thinks that "in the future there will remain a very large group of people who are happy to find suitable voluntary work ... through personal contact and personal brokerage". When it comes to specific target groups, Expert 1 still sees a future role for volunteer centres to guide people to the right (volunteer) place. Expert 7 thinks that in the future, this type of brokerage will "increasingly be done by volunteers" under the guidance of a paid coordinator. Project-based working with special target groups proposed by the municipality is becoming increasingly important (E3).

The search for new (target group) volunteers continues. Expert 8 sees people approaching retirement age as a potential new target group. The same applies to the elderly. He notes that "there are still volunteer organizations that say: you turn 70, then you are not allowed to volunteer here anymore". He personally finds that "really old thinking". Expert 1 mentions in this context a study that will be carried out by Movisie and Participation, Emancipation Professionals [PEP] in 2020 on the "never before volunteer". Research is being done into how people who have never done voluntary work before can be enthused and (voluntarily) activated. Expert 7 sees (in a personal capacity) potential in the business sector and proposes this in terms of "sponsorship". A company becomes an "ambassador" or "friend" of a volunteer centre. In return, the volunteer centre organizes, for example, a company outing or helps to make the organization dementia-friendly.

The experts also mention a number of organizational developments at volunteer centres that will have an impact on the future fulfilment of the brokerage function. Expert 1 foresees a change of focus "from volunteer-focused to organization-focused to community-focused. The volunteer centre will become "a kind of network player in the local social domain ... who always brings the broad importance of voluntary action into society issues and supports, trains and guides organizations in this".
There is also talk of an upscaling (E1, E2, E5b) in the sense that volunteer centres will cover a larger working area and will also operate regionally, outside of the municipal boundaries. This is already being discussed at a number of volunteer centres. While, in a limited number of municipalities, volunteer centres will be abolished (E1, E3). In one specific municipality, where this is the case, a redesign of volunteer support is being worked on in cooperation with

Movisie. Following the example of the sports sector, the plan is to deploy a club counsellor[1] there.

Another visible movement is the development of volunteer centres towards local centres of expertise (E2, E4, E5a/b, E6, E7). According to expert 2, they will "promote expertise [in the field of volunteering] in civil society organizations, e.g. ... courses, training, writing vacancies". The expert finds this role very valuable. Expert 4 also sees a future in the role of a volunteer centre "as the central centre of expertise ... from which all kinds of initiatives can arise and be nurtured, where connections are made between all kinds of organizations, not only aid agencies but also associations, churches". Expert 8 also believes that there is a future for volunteer centres as knowledge centres "because there is a great need for a physical point with knowledge and expertise on the volunteering dossier". The three volunteer centres of which experts (E5a/b, E6, E7) have been interviewed already present themselves as knowledge centres for organizations. Expert 1 notes that this development is more difficult for small volunteer centres to follow. "In the case of a lot of very small volunteer centres, you see that in the end there may be a desire to do things at a different level, but that ... there is simply a lack of manpower". Expert 3 sees that advisory work at smaller volunteer centres is a secondary task for now. Brokerage still occupies an important place there, according to expert 5a.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Brokerage between supply and demand in the volunteer market is one of the (main) tasks of volunteer centres. Over the past decade, these volunteer centres have been confronted with four important developments: increasing digitalization, the introduction of the Social Support Act 2015 and the Participation Act, a changing volunteer market and the emergence of new brokerage initiatives. In this chapter, a picture of these developments has been sketched on the basis of literature research. Subsequently, this picture is further specified on the basis of interviews with nine experts in the field of voluntary action or volunteer brokerage. The expert interviews also examined the views of experts on the future of volunteer centres as brokers. The following insights emerge.

Digitization has become an integral part of the volunteer brokerage process. Digital means of communication are being used and data collections have been digitized. Furthermore, online brokerage has gained a lot of importance. Although recent data is lacking, figures from 2005, 2007 and 2011 show that the number of online mediations increasingly exceeds the number of offline mediations. Today it is standard for volunteer centres to have an online brokerage platform. The expert interviews show that volunteer centres are increasingly using

an external online platform instead of building and maintaining a platform themselves. A popular platform, which is now used in 50 municipalities, is NLforeachother. Working with an external platform leads to a reduction in administrative tasks for the volunteer centres, which has consequences for the organization and the deployment of employees. A point of consideration for volunteer centres is the degree of intervention in the brokerage process. Experts indicate that this has to do with the fact that when volunteer centres do not intervene, they feel that they have to give up their brokerage role, whilst also removing the possibility of "quality control" of supply and demand.

In spite of the rise of online brokerage, offline brokerage remains important, especially for those volunteers who are less able to find their way digitally and/or need extra guidance according to the expert's. In addition to personal guidance, a lot of project-based work is carried out with different target groups. Volunteer centres have traditionally mediated between individuals and organizations rather than between individuals and individuals (one-to-one brokerage). However, they do support one-to-one brokerage by placing vacancies of organizations that bring together individual requests for help and individual providers, as evidenced from the interviews.

Volunteers have a major role to play in the implementation of the Social Support Act 2015. This puts further pressure on the already tight volunteer market on which volunteer centres operate. In addition, findings from GiN show that the number of volunteers and the number of hours spent on volunteering is declining. Studies by SCP and CBS do not (yet) show this development. GiN makes a connection with the increasing demand from the Social Support Act for informal help. Experts from two volunteer centres endorse this development on the basis of their practical experiences. According to experts, the decline of volunteers mainly concerns the care sector and neighbourhood help and support. Partly under the influence of the Social Support Act 2015 and the Participation Act, volunteer centres are having to deal with new groups of volunteers. These are, on the one hand, provided by the municipalities where the volunteer centres operate and are often special groups that have to be mediated on a project basis. On the other hand, volunteer centres themselves are actively looking for new target groups in order to continue to meet the demand for volunteers.

As far as the volunteer centres themselves are concerned, there are also various developments. Experts refer to the scaling up of the working area and more community-based working. Profiling towards local expertise centres is mentioned too. This development is also described in the literature. Yet, according to experts, in a number of municipalities volunteer centres are being redesigned or replaced by club counsellors. Furthermore, one expert notes that municipalities are increasingly adopting a functional volunteering policy by using volunteers

to reduce health care costs. This approach is at odds with the broad approach advocated by the volunteer centres themselves.

Many new online brokerage initiatives have emerged in recent years. Big players are NLforeachother, WeHelp, NEIGHBOUR and Deedmob. The new brokerage initiatives mainly focus on brokerage between individuals, so-called one-to-one brokerage or community brokerage. NLforeachother is an exception to this and also mediates between individuals and organizations. As indicated earlier, the platform of NLforeachother is regularly used for the online brokerage of volunteer centres.

When experts are explicitly asked about the future, they see a further development with regard to the outsourcing of online brokerage. Furthermore, attention to customers' experiences (customer journey, web care) is mentioned. This helps to better meet their wishes and needs. Offline brokerage is also considered important for volunteer centres in the future, although it is expected that more and more emphasis will be placed on project-based working with special target groups. The search for new target groups of potential volunteers will continue. At the organizational level, developments are anticipated towards scaling-up, community-based work and profiling as local expertise centres. It is expected that small volunteer centres will have difficulty following the latest developments due to a lack of human resources. Furthermore, termination of municipal support can pose a threat to the existence of (some) volunteer centres.

Reflecting on the literature findings and statements of experts, it can be observed that the role of volunteer centres is changing. On the one hand, this is associated with the offline implementation of volunteer brokerage. Here there is an increasing focus on project-based brokerage. On the other hand, the importance of volunteer brokerage by and for volunteer centres is changing. New brokerage initiatives demand to be a part of the volunteer market. This particularly concerns the part of the market where volunteer centres are not very active, namely the brokerage between individuals who ask and provide help. At the volunteer centres themselves, the role of brokerage is limited partly by outsourcing online brokerage. Since many volunteer centres have long derived their right to exist from the brokerage function, this can negatively influence the identity[2] of the volunteer centres. It can also have consequences at the financial level, i.e. municipal subsidy provision, if the subsidy settlement is largely based on the brokerage function. Furthermore, it may impact the organizational structure, as certain functions related to online brokerage become redundant.
Possibly related to the reduced importance of the brokerage role is the increasing importance of providing information and advice (the expert role) for volunteer centres. This development is particularly visible at larger volunteer centres. Smaller volunteer centres are lagging behind. As a result, there is a risk of a division between large and small volunteer centres.

An increase in scale, in the sense of joining forces with other (small) volunteer centres in the region, can offer a solution here.

In light of the above, it is considered useful to conduct research into the organization of volunteer centres with specific attention to the identity and structure of the organization. This gives insight into the nature and extent of problems in this field and can contribute to solutions.
In addition, general monitoring of supply and demand is important in order to respond to new developments in the market. A great deal of research is already being carried out by various parties. Reference has been made to the research projects of SCP, CBS and GiN. However, further/more research is desirable into the possible decline in voluntary action and the causes of this.
At least as important as monitoring is that the results are shared with the field and action is taken if desired. NOV offers a suitable platform for this with its nationwide network of volunteer centres, the Network Support Voluntary Action [NOVi], which it facilitates. This national network includes various regional or thematic collaborations of volunteer centres (NOV.nl, 2020).

Notes

1. Club counsellors have the task of helping the (sports) clubs to which they are affiliated, so that they themselves are able to function properly. (Dijk, B., Boven, M., Waardenburg, M., & Slender, H. (2018). *De complexe rol van de verenigingsondersteuner*. Retrieved February 3, 2020 from: https://www. sportknowhowxl.nl/nieuws-en-achtergronden/column-xl/item/112103/de-complexe-rol-van-de-verenigingsondersteuner)
2. See among other things: Schilder, M. (2014). *Wie ben ik? Over het belang van een sterke organisatie-identiteit*. Retrieved February 20, 2020 from https://www. marketingfacts.nl/ berichten/wie-ben-ik-over-het-belang-van-een-sterke-organisatie-identiteit

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CHAPTER 7

General discussion

BACKGROUND

At the start of the PhD research project reported on in this thesis, volunteer brokerage was an important, if not the most important, task of volunteer centres. In the context of this task, volunteer centres linked demand (volunteer organizations) and supply (volunteers) on the volunteer market. A high demand came from volunteer organizations in the care and welfare sectors. They experienced a great shortage of volunteers and, as a result, were sometimes unable to carry out certain activities. These organizations used volunteer centres, among other methods, as recruitment channels. Given the success rate of mediations and personal experience from brokerage practice, the process of volunteer brokerage was expected to provide room for improvement (Dekker et al., 2008; Plemper et al., 2006; Ploegmakers et al., 2011; Stubbe & van Dijk, 2006; Terpstra et al., 2008). This would allow volunteer centres to make better contributions to the solution of volunteer shortages. Scientific research about the Dutch practice of volunteer brokerage was lacking. There was a need for knowledge on and an understanding of how volunteer centres could achieve better results in the daily practice of volunteer brokerage. For this reason, this PhD research project was set up.

The aim of the PhD research project was to gain insight into the implementation of volunteer brokerage by volunteer centres, and the way in which the success rate could be improved. This aim has been translated into two questions with corresponding sub-questions. Due to an increase in internet use and the long duration of the research project, two more research questions were added later on. This eventually led to the following four research questions with sub-questions:

1. How is volunteer brokerage organized in the Netherlands and which part do volunteer centres play as volunteer brokers?
2. How can recognised success factors for volunteer brokerage be used in practice by volunteer centres?
   a. Which factors contribute to the success of volunteer brokerage?
   b. How does volunteer brokerage offered by volunteer centres occur in practice?
   c. When and how can success factors for matching volunteers and organizations be incorporated in the practice of volunteer brokerage offered by volunteer centres?
3. How can the usability of volunteer brokerage websites of volunteer centres be studied and what kind of information does this provide?
4. What developments have influenced the brokerage role of volunteer centres in the past 10 years and what does this mean for the future of volunteer centres as volunteer brokers?

MAIN FINDINGS

The four research questions and sub-questions were answered in three phases. In this section, the answers to the various (sub-) questions are discussed per research phase. Phase I gives answers to research questions 1, 2a, 2b and 2c, Phase II answers research question 3 and Phase III relates to research question 4.

Main findings: Phase I

Volunteer brokerage in the Netherlands: the part volunteer centres play

The answer to research question 1 was derived from a literature search. Volunteer brokerage is defined in the literature as: bringing together supply and demand in volunteering. The supply comes from volunteers and the demand from volunteer organizations. The literature search showed that two types of brokers are active on the volunteer market: internal and external brokers. The difference between the two is that they have a direct (internal) relation with their customers or not (external).

Volunteer centres operate as external brokers. As such, they play a central role on the supply side of the volunteer market. Other external brokers, such as social internship brokers and corporate social responsibility brokers, often work under the umbrella of volunteer centres. In addition, internal brokers who represent volunteers often outsource brokerage to volunteer centres. These are brokers who are affiliated with social activation agencies (departments of social affairs/social services of municipalities, welfare institutions and reintegration agencies), secondary schools and companies.

On the demand side, in addition to volunteer centres, volunteer coordinators also play an important role in their capacity as internal brokers. Volunteer coordinators are mainly active in volunteer organizations working in the healthcare sector. Due to their large workload, they often do not have enough time for brokerage activities.

The overall importance of volunteer brokerage as a recruitment channel varies per work sector. Volunteer organizations in the care and welfare sector make the most use (24%) of volunteer brokerage. For volunteers, data is only available for the healthcare sector – here, 36% of the volunteers were recruited through a volunteer centre.

Factors contributing to the success of volunteer brokerage

The answer to research question 2a was also obtained through a literature search. The results of this search showed that motivation and feelings of pride and respect on the part of the volunteer can add to the success of volunteer brokerage. Motivation proved to play a crucial role in selecting the type of volunteer work undertaken and, subsequently, the degree of job satisfaction and willingness to continue volunteering in both the short and long term. It has also been shown that people are more willing to volunteer for an organization if, based on information about the success of that organization, they expect to derive pride and respect

from it. However, emphasizing success has the opposite effect. People get the impression that they are not really needed as a volunteer. Feelings of pride and respect also appeared to contribute to involvement in the volunteer organization and the intention to remain as a volunteer there. Information about the organization's support of volunteers also had a positive effect on the expected feelings of respect.
By means of an additional literature search, it was possible to further refine the research findings regarding motivation with recent research on this topic. These publications reported a relationship between certain motives and particular types of work and sectors.

The course of volunteer brokerage offered by volunteer centres in practice

The answer to research question 2b lies in the results of our field research. The field study showed that volunteer centres offer both offline and online brokerage. However, fully online brokerage with no personal contact with employees of the volunteer centre was not an option at the time of the study. Volunteer centres follow a similar procedure when implementing volunteer brokerage. The procedure involves six phases:

1. Orientation – Volunteers and volunteer organizations can view practical information on volunteering in general. Volunteers can explore the various volunteer opportunities through a database at the office or online. Volunteer centres do not usually have a database of available volunteers for volunteer organizations to look into.
2. Registration – In the case of online brokerage, volunteers must register in order to access the contact details of volunteer organizations. With offline brokerage, registration is often incorporated into the Matching phase. Volunteer organizations also have to register in order to make use of volunteer brokerage.
3. Matching – The focus is on finding suitable volunteer opportunities for volunteers. To this end, information about a volunteer is collected through a questionnaire, an interview and, occasionally, a test. In the case of online volunteer brokerage, volunteers can provide information with regards to their wishes and preferences via a selection menu. Sometimes, it is also possible to use tests. For organizations, information is collected whether they are bona fide and whether the jobs/tasks they offer meet the criteria for volunteering.
4. Reaction – When a suitable opportunity is found, the volunteer organization is approached and an introductory meeting between the volunteer and organization is arranged.
5. Introduction – The volunteer and the volunteer organization get together and exchange further information. Based on this, it is decided whether they will enter a partnership.
6. Feedback – The volunteer and/or volunteer organization provide feedback to the volunteer centre on the outcome of the Introduction phase. In the case of a mismatch, the procedure may start again. Otherwise, the role of the volunteer centre is over.

Incorporation of success factors for matching volunteers and organizations in the practice of volunteer brokerage offered by volunteer centres

The answer to research question 2c was obtained through field research. In order to take into account the motivation of volunteers, insight must be gained. This is best done in the Matching phase, because this phase focuses on collecting information. For an optimal match, it is important that motivation is properly assessed and that the assessment is valid and reliable. Literature search indicated that a standardized test is the best option for this.

At the time of the field study, volunteer centres paid limited attention to the motivations of the volunteers they mediated. When information on motivation was collected, it was mainly collected through personal interviews, or less frequently through questionnaires or even standardized tests. From the two most used tests, the Focus Test and the Choosing Volunteer Work Test, only the first dealt with motives directly. However, the second included questions about benefits that can give an indication of what motivates people. No research has been conducted on the validity and reliability of the abovementioned tests. In the case of online brokerage, specific online tests should be used to obtain information about motivation. Volunteer centres have not reported such tests.

To address feelings of pride and respect among volunteers, information about the volunteer organization is important. The Matching and Introduction phases offer the best opportunities to provide this information. In the Matching phase, information about volunteer organizations is given in vacancy texts and personal interviews. These vacancy texts are written by the volunteer organizations and assessed and edited by volunteer centres. In the Introduction phase, information about the organization is also shared with volunteers. However, this usually happens outside the scope of the volunteer centre.

Main findings Phase II

Studying the usability of volunteer brokerage websites of volunteer centres: how it can be done and the kind of information it provides

Research question 3 was answered through field research preceded by a literature search. Usability is defined in the literature as: the extent to which a system, a product or a service (in this context, a website) can be used by specified users to achieve specified goals with effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction in a specified context of use. Usability is important to keep visitors on a website and, in the case of volunteer brokerage websites, not to lose them as future volunteers. User testing is a commonly used method to study usability. The field study shows how it can also be applied to volunteer brokerage websites of volunteer centres. It provides volunteer centres with a tool to study the usability of their websites. User testing of the websites of five volunteer centres revealed the kinds of problems users experience when using these websites. There were problems at all five websites. The main problems users encountered were related to the structure and content of the website. Structural

problems included poor findability of items and a lack of appropriate tools. Content problems concerned a lack of sufficient information and an inadequate supply of vacancies.

Main findings Phase III

Developments influencing the brokerage role of volunteer centres in the past 10 years: their meaning for the future of volunteer centres as volunteer brokers

The answer to this research question (4) was obtained through expert interviews following a literature review. Based on the literature review, four developments were identified that have had an impact on volunteer brokerage by volunteer centres. These concern an increasing digitization of society, the introduction of the Social Support Act 2015 and the Participation Act, a changing volunteer market and the emergence of new brokerage initiatives.

The literature study and expert interviews showed that, under the influence of digitization, data collections at volunteer centres have been digitized, digital means of communication are being used and the importance of online brokerage has increased. For online brokerage, volunteer centres increasingly use external online platforms. Such platforms have proliferated in recent years. They mainly focus on brokerage between individuals, with the exception of NLforeachother [NLvoorelkaar]. NLforeachother is, therefore, often selected by volunteer centres to support their online brokerage.

Offline brokerage is still important, especially for volunteers who are less comfortable with digital means and/or need extra guidance. The introduction of the Social Support Act 2015 creates, on the one hand, a greater demand for volunteers and, on the other hand, it leads to heightened pressure on the informal care circuit, which limits the availability of people to volunteer. Partly under the influence of the Social Support Act 2015 and the Participation Act, the diversity in the volunteer market has increased. New groups of volunteers have arisen, and volunteering has become more flexible and non-committal. Furthermore, the demand for volunteers has been broadened to include individuals. Volunteering is also increasingly taking place within neighbourhoods and districts.

Looking to the future, experts see a changing brokerage role of volunteer centres. Offline, there is an increasing focus on project-based brokerage of special target groups. Meanwhile, online brokerage is increasingly outsourced with more attention to (online) customer experience. More generally, developments towards scaling up their reach, incorporating community-based working and raising their profile as local expertise centres, are expected for volunteer centres. It is feared that smaller volunteer centres will have difficulty following this latest development.

REFLECTIONS ON THE MAIN FINDINGS

The various studies carried out within the framework of this PhD research project have yielded many different insights. This concerns both insights that are related to the four (sub) research questions, and insights into the development of volunteer brokerage over time.

The literature search in Phase I made clear how volunteer brokerage is organized in the Netherlands and what (central) role volunteer centres play in this. The picture sketched relates to the situation in 2008. In 2019, according to the literature and expert study in Phase III, the situation appears to have changed somewhat, in the sense that new external volunteer brokers have entered the volunteer market. These new brokers, however, mainly focus on brokerage between individuals for one-on-one support and less so on brokerage between individuals and volunteer organizations. They respond to the growing market demand, which is partly caused by the introduction of the Social Support Act. Volunteer centres are only indirectly involved in brokerage for one-on-one support. The brokerage offered by these new brokers is thus an important complement to the brokerage activities of volunteer centres. Moreover, new brokers, in particular NLforeachother, provide support to volunteer centres by making their platforms available for online brokerage.
Another change compared to the situation in 2008 concerns the reduction of the brokerage role in social internships. Since January 2015, a social internship is no longer compulsory by the government. Schools decide for themselves whether their students should follow a social internship. With the disappearance of the legal obligation, government funding for social internship brokers was also terminated. These brokers often worked under the umbrella of volunteer centres. However, some volunteer centres have continued to facilitate social internships (Den Haag Doet, 2020; Laks, 2020).
Furthermore, the social service [MDT] came into effect on 1 February 2020. Volunteer centres (can) also play a role in this, as shown in the expert interviews.

The literature study in Phase I has provided information about factors that contribute to the success of volunteer brokerage. It concerns motivation and feelings of pride and respect. The subsequent field study made clear how volunteer brokerage works in practice. Based on the elaborated practice model, it showed how the identified success factors can be incorporated into the brokerage process. This offers volunteer centres a handle to increase the yield of volunteer brokerage.
Four comments can be made on the above. In the first place, it will be more difficult for volunteer centres to connect to factors such as pride and respect than to motives. The responsibility of the volunteer organizations image, which is important in the context of developing a sense of pride and respect for those organizations, lies largely with the volunteer organizations and not with the volunteer centres. Much depends on the cooperation between

volunteer centres and volunteer organizations in order to portray the right image of these organizations. With regards to the perception of volunteer organizations, it can be said that at the time of the field study, there was some contact between volunteer centres and volunteer organizations during the Matching phase. Volunteer centres were also involved to some extent in the drafting of vacancy texts.
Secondly, at least in terms of motivation, it can already be established that there is certainly room for improvement. At the time of the field study, little structural attention was given to motivation during volunteer brokerage. In an offline context, information gathering on motives was mainly done through personal interviews and, less frequently, through questionnaires. Tests were used only occasionally, while, if standardized, they are the most appropriate method for collecting this type of data. Moreover, of the tests used, no data on validity and reliability was available. Collecting information online about motives for matching purposes was only possible through tests. User testing of five websites in Phase II showed, that tests (at least for these websites) were either unavailable or difficult to find.
A third remark concerns the fact that certain groups of volunteers will be less easy to match on motives than others. Think of guided volunteers. Guided volunteering refers to "forms of commitment in which participation in, or the conditions under which, and the manner in which, participation is initiated and/or arranged by others" (Hustinx et al., 2015, p. 2). In this type of volunteering, the initiative comes from a third party and not from the volunteers themselves. This leads, among other things, to a lower level of motivation than when people choose to volunteer on their own initiative (Mezzo, 2014).
Finally, the practice model is based on the brokerage of individual volunteers. From the expert interviews, it appears that volunteer centres nowadays also do a lot of project-based brokerage with groups. This will undoubtedly have consequences for the implementation of the brokerage process. However, here too, information about the volunteers will have to be collected and information about possible activities and volunteer organizations involved will have to be given. This is the moment when the identified success factors can be included in the brokerage process.

As well as describing ways of incorporating success factors, the practice model also provides a framework for volunteer centres to provide insight into their brokerage activities. This can be important for the coordination of work, but also for the training of new brokers. Transparency is also vital for the customers of volunteer centres, so that no false expectations can arise. In addition, the model is a useful tool to justify the efforts of employees and the use of subsidy funds to the funding bodies.
Furthermore, in view of the (growing) shortage of volunteers, it is at least as important to continue to inspire volunteers. Due to the high demand for volunteers, there is a danger that people are too quickly and too easily allocated to voluntary activities. Careful matching prevents people from losing their enthusiasm for volunteering and increases the chance

that they will (continue to) commit themselves in the future. Given the limited attention to motivation in the brokerage process, volunteer centres do not seem to be sufficiently aware of this.

The literature study in Phase II shows that online brokerage by volunteer centres has increased over the years due to the growing digitization of society. This led to the addition of another factor that influences the success of brokerage: the usability of a volunteer brokerage website. The importance of usability cannot be emphasized enough. When a volunteer brokerage website is not usable, there is a real risk that users are discouraged and, as a result, abandon the website. Moreover, they will probably not return to the website either. This means that potential volunteers are lost. In these times with a great shortage of volunteers, this is an unaffordable expense.
The user tests carried out provide volunteer centres with insights into the issues associated with poor usability. These can be general problems that affect multiple websites, but also problems that may only occur with a specific website. However, it is clear that usability is not a matter of course, given the fact that each of the five websites examined had multiple usability problems. Therefore it pays to study usability and understanding usability issues. By doing this, volunteer centres will make their websites considerably more usable. This will reduce the chance of users leaving the website prematurely and not returning.
The widely used method of user testing proved to be suitable for investigating the usability of volunteer brokerage websites of volunteer centres. It should be noted, however, that it is a specialist and time-consuming issue to be dealt with by experts.
Given the fact that online brokerage is increasingly outsourced by volunteer centres to new brokers, as identified in Phase III, the findings regarding the application and outcomes of user testing may also be of value to them. Like volunteer centres, they benefit from keeping visitors on their websites.

Reflecting on the literature findings and the statements from experts in Phase III, it can be stated that the role of volunteer centres is changing. This has to do with the offline implementation of volunteer brokerage. According to experts, there is an increasing focus on project-based brokerage. Moreover, the importance of volunteer brokerage by and for volunteer centres is changing. New brokerage initiatives claim part of the volunteer market. This particularly concerns the part of the market where volunteer centres are not very active, namely the brokerage between individuals who ask for and provide help. At the volunteer centres themselves, the role of brokerage is limited partly by outsourcing online brokerage.
Many volunteer centres have long derived their right to exist through the brokerage function. The declining importance of volunteer brokerage therefore can negatively influence the identity of these volunteer centres. This, in turn, can have a negative impact on the results (CP, 2020; Schilder, 2014). There may also be consequences at the financial level, i.e.

municipal subsidy provision, if the subsidy settlement is largely based on the brokerage task. Furthermore, it can have an impact on the organizational structure, as certain activities related to online brokerage become redundant.
The growing relevance of providing information and advice (the expert role) is possibly related to the reduced importance of the brokerage. This development is especially visible at larger volunteer centres. Smaller volunteer centres are lagging behind. As a result, there is a risk of a division between large and small volunteer centres. The increase in scale mentioned by the experts, in the sense of joining forces with other (small) volunteer centres within the same region, could offer a solution here.

STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

There are some general limitations to this PhD research project. One general limitation concerns the duration of the project, a total of 12 years from the start of the first study to the publishing of the thesis. This means that some results (the field research from Phase I) may be outdated. However, this can also impart benefits. Due to the long duration, it is possible to sketch a longitudinal picture of the period 2008-2019 and to see what developments volunteer centres have undergone as brokers. In particular, the latest research in Phase III makes an important contribution to this. The long duration also made it possible to incorporate new, additional insights into volunteers' motivations.
Another general limitation is the fact that the studies solely focused on the brokerage practice of volunteer centres. Although they may give a different interpretation to volunteer brokerage, the results found do give other brokers insights into factors that are important for a successful match and how this can be achieved. More specific strengths and limitations relate to the different sub-studies from Phases I, II and III.

Strengths and limitations of the Phase I studies
The generalizability of the survey data is somewhat restricted. The survey was limited to South Holland, one of twelve provinces in the Netherlands. However, this province had a relatively large number of volunteer centres at the time of the survey – 16% of the total number of volunteer centres in the Netherlands. There was also great diversity across volunteer centres in terms of work area and organizational form. The response to the survey was high (74%), so a good impression could be obtained of the working methods of volunteer centres in South Holland.
As far as the generalizability of the interviews is concerned, the degree of substantive generalization is important in this context. Substantive generalizability refers to the extent to which research results can be transferred to comparable, unexamined situations. An indication of this can be found in an interview with a volunteer centre located outside the

research area (Groningen). The brokerage model found in the field study also appeared to apply there (Baarda et al., 2009).

In addition to the limitations and strengths that relate to the generalizability of the results in Phase I, there are also limitations and strengths that relate specifically to the chosen research methods. In Phase I, four types of research methods were used: literature research, survey, semi-structured interviews and desk research.
For the literature search, it can be noted that concessions had to be made with regards to the sources. If possible, primary sources like scientific publications and monographs were used in the literature search. However, these sources were not always available, for example in mapping the organizational structure of volunteer brokerage in the Netherlands. As such, grey literature and online publications of interest groups were also used here.
The survey, the semi-structured interviews and the desk research were all part of one field study. The survey could be answered online or in the form of a Word document. A survey has the advantage that respondents will be less inclined to give socially desirable answers, as there is no direct interaction with an interviewer. The disadvantages are that there is no insight into who will complete the survey, and under which (distracting) circumstances. Furthermore, it is not possible to go deeper into topics. Therefore, the information collected is more general and superficial in nature (Baarda et al., 2010).
For the semi-structured interviews, a list of subjects was used on which information from all respondents had to be obtained. This way of interviewing makes it possible to deepen the content within the boundaries of the research theme. In addition, the absence of pre-formulated questions makes it possible to adapt well with the heterogeneous frames of reference from respondents. A disadvantage, however, is that the respondents' answers can be influenced by the presence of an interviewer (Baarda et al., 2009).
For the desk research, documents from volunteer centres, volunteer organizations and individual volunteers were used. When using existing documents, as was the case here, social desirability cannot play a role. This enhances both reliability and validity. However, documents contain indirect information, which may be incomplete and biased. It is likewise possible that documents can be misinterpreted by the investigator (Baarda et al., 2009).
To some extent, the above limitations of the studies in the field study could be overcome by the combined study design. This is called methodical triangulation: the strength of one method compensates for the weakness of the other method (Boeije, 2012).

Strengths and limitations of the Phase II study
Some strengths and limitations can also be noted for the usability study in Phase II. Firstly, the generalizability of the outcomes of the usability study is limited, because only five volunteer brokerage websites were tested. However, it was not the aim to generalize the research findings. The aim was to establish whether the user testing method could also be used to

investigate the usability of brokerage websites of volunteer centres. It was also intended to get an idea of the type of data user tests could provide. From this point of view, the findings are certainly valuable.
Secondly, data on the user test target group for this study, i.e. potential volunteers, was missing. The composition of the test panels was therefore based on data from active volunteers.
Thirdly, the test included a number of preselected tasks. It may be possible that ordinary users encounter issues that did not occur in the testing situation. With a view to the tasks and the diversity of testers, it can be assumed that the most common issues regarding online brokerage were targeted.
The last shortcoming has to do with the testers. Because this was a test situation, and not normal conditions, people may have acted differently or assumed socially desirable behaviour.

Strengths and limitations of the Phase III study
The expert interviews in Phase III, like the interviews in Phase I, were semi-structured in nature. This means that the aforementioned strengths and limitations for semi-structured interviews also apply here.
The generalizability of the research findings is limited, as they are the opinions of only a small group of experts. However, these experts have been chosen with great care, and provide a broad reflection of the knowledge and expertise regarding volunteer brokerage and volunteer centres in the Netherlands. A missed opportunity was that it was not possible to interview a representative of the Association of Dutch Municipalities [VNG]. Multiple attempts to contact this association failed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the discussed findings and subsequent reflections, a number of recommendations can be made.

The literature review and the subsequent field study in Phase I provided concrete information on success factors for volunteer brokerage, and how and when they can be fitted into the brokerage process. It is essential that this information is shared with and then applied by volunteer centres. This is possible, amongst other things, through publications in scientific journals accessible to volunteer centres and references to them through interest groups, such as the Association of Dutch Volunteer Organizations [NOV] and Movisie. This thesis and the published papers contributes to this. However, it is also important that volunteer centres are prepared to absorb and use this information.
In order to be able to use the information for application in their own practice, volunteer centres must firstly take a critical look at the presentation of, and communication about

vacancies and volunteer organizations in relation to feelings of pride and respect that volunteers may be able to derive. Research by Boezeman (2009) shows that information about the support of volunteers by volunteer organizations is particularly important in this context. Volunteer centres must ensure that this information is propagated in both vacancies and personal contact. This information should also be well coordinated with the volunteer organizations.
In addition, volunteer centres should take a critical look at the extent to which they consider the motivations of volunteers in the brokerage process and the use of motivation tests to assess motivation. In the case of non-use, it is necessary to determine the reasons for this and whether they outweigh the benefits of testing. If tests are used, it is important to know whether these tests are valid and reliable and if not, if suitable alternatives are available. However, at the time of the PhD study this was difficult to establish because data on the validity and reliability of the motivation tests used in brokerage was lacking. It is therefore considered useful to investigate this further.

In terms of motivation, a number of recommendations for further investigation can be formulated. Chapter 4 showed that research is still ongoing into the relation between motives and volunteer work tasks/sectors. Knowledge about such relations can greatly facilitate and improve the work of volunteer centres as brokers. However, more research is still needed. It is important that new research findings are made accessible and comprehensible to employees of volunteer centres so that they can benefit from these findings. There should be a regular exchange of data between science and practice.
Equally important is the incorporation of research findings into validated tests, which can directly link volunteers to suitable volunteer activities or work sectors on the basis of their motivations. This applies all the more to online testing. An important point of criticism from the testers in Phase II was that the test results were not linked to the available vacancies. The test results gave them only a very broad, general description of potentially suitable volunteer activities. Under normal circumstances, this could lead to misinterpretation or, even worse, irritation and leaving the website. This is a clear avenue for improvement.

Besides the volunteers' motivation and feelings of pride and respect, usability of the brokerage website is also a determining factor for the success of volunteer brokerage. The usability study in Phase II has shown this. Here it was demonstrated how the usability of a volunteer brokerage website can be monitored via user tests to improve it if desired. It is recommended that volunteer centres perform user tests regularly, as a website constantly changes both in structure and content. Most volunteer centres will probably not have the knowledge and experience to carry out user tests themselves. Therefore, outsourcing to a professional company is a suitable solution. However, this can be a costly affair. An alternative is to recruit an expert volunteer for testing. Collaboration can also be sought with a technical

college/university, and letting students carry out user tests. In the case of online brokerage being outsourced to another broker, such as NLforeachother, this external broker should then ensure regular user testing.

Another more specific recommendation has to do with supporting other brokers. The Phase I literature review on the organization of volunteer brokerage and the role of volunteer centres in it revealed, among other things, that volunteer coordinators have difficulties in fulfilling their role as internal brokers. These coordinators, who mainly work at care organizations, are faced with a high workload. Overburdening still appears to be an issue in the current situation (Grootegoed et al., 2018). Volunteer centres could provide support here by taking over part of the brokerage process, particularly the Matching phase (including recruitment). Good communication between the volunteer centre and the volunteer coordinator is an essential condition to ensure that the wishes and requirements of the volunteer organization are met. Volunteer centres are well represented in the Netherlands to realise such cooperation. In addition, an increasing number of volunteer centres are outsourcing online brokerage (see Chapter 6) and, therefore, have the time and manpower available to do so. As the literature review in Phase I shows, at the time of the study, the confidence of care organizations in volunteer centres was limited. This was mainly due to poor results and unfamiliarity with volunteer centres. It is, therefore, important that volunteer centres present themselves strongly as brokers or experts in the field of volunteer brokerage and pursue good results.

Finally, some recommendations are given in this section that relate to current and (expected) future developments at volunteer centres with regards to volunteer brokerage. The literature review and the expert interviews in Phase III made clear that the volunteer market is in a state of flux. The diversity of volunteers and voluntary action is growing. There are also signs that the level of voluntary action is decreasing, in favour of informal care. For this reason, it is important to monitor supply and demand in order to respond promptly to new market developments. A great deal of research is already being carried out by various parties. Reference is made to the research projects of the Netherlands Institute for Social Research, Statistics Netherlands and Giving in the Netherlands. However, further/more research is desirable into the possible decline in volunteering and the causes of this. This poses a serious threat to the already tight volunteer market.

The Phase III studies also showed that the implementation of volunteer brokerage is changing. Online brokerage is more often being outsourced and, for offline brokerage, there is a greater emphasis on project-based brokerage. It is interesting to investigate to what extent the described practice model is still valid for project-based brokerage, and to what extent there is room to link up with the identified success factors.

Further, Phase III has shown that the importance of volunteer brokerage for volunteer centres is decreasing. Since many volunteer centres have long derived their right to exist from volunteer brokerage, this can negatively influence the identity of these volunteer centres. It can also have an impact on the organizational structure because certain functions related to online brokerage become redundant. In light of this, it is considered useful to conduct research into the organization of volunteer centres with specific attention to the identity and structure(s) of the organization. This gives insight into the nature and extent of the problems that volunteer centres have with a new volunteer brokerage approach and may contribute to possible solutions. In this context, attention may also be given to the division of volunteer centres predicted by experts as a result of the development of large volunteer centres into centres of expertise for volunteering.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

This thesis shows that volunteer centres follow a similar six-phase procedure when bringing together supply and demand in the volunteer market. Volunteer brokerage can take place offline, at the office of a volunteer centre, or online. Motivation and feelings of pride and respect on the part of the volunteer can make an important contribution to the success of volunteer brokerage. Based on knowledge of the course of the brokerage process, it is possible to indicate how and when these success factors can be incorporated. For online brokerage, website usability can be added as a third success factor. It has been demonstrated how the usability of volunteer brokerage websites can be investigated and what kind of information this provides in increasing usability.

Due to several major developments during the last decade, the importance and the interpretation of volunteer brokerage by volunteer centres is changing. There is a growing emphasis on online brokerage with an increasing use of external online platforms. Offline brokerage remains important, with a larger focus on project-based brokerage of special target groups. The demand for volunteers remains high, while the supply is coming under pressure. For the future, developments towards scaling up, community-based working and raising their profile as local expertise centres are expected for volunteer centres.

The ability of volunteer centres for self-reflection and willingness to make changes are important conditions for taking advantage of the above findings. It is equally important that scientists make findings of future research on this topic accessible to volunteer centres. Furthermore, especially with regards to offline brokerage, it is necessary to examine how the findings can be incorporated into the current working method.

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SUMMARY

SUMMARY

This thesis reports on a research project on the optimization of volunteer brokerage by volunteer centres. Volunteer brokerage stands for bringing together supply and demand in the volunteer market. The research project took place in the period from 2008 to 2019 in South Holland and consisted of a number of successive sub-studies that were carried out in three phases.

Chapter 1 starts with the introduction of the research topic. The first volunteer centres in the Netherlands were established in the early seventies on initiatives from the government. Several subsidy schemes resulted in a significant boost in the further growth of the number of volunteer centres. From the start, volunteer centres have explicitly focused on volunteer brokerage. Over the years, various other tasks have been added, but volunteer brokerage remained an important, if not the most important, task for many centres. As brokers, volunteer centres constitute a frequently used recruitment channel for volunteer organizations, particularly in the care and welfare sector. These organizations have been struggling with shortages of volunteers for many years. The degree of success of volunteer brokerage is still relatively limited. Optimization of the brokerage process can contribute to solving the volunteer shortages.

Following the general introduction, the aim and research questions that are central to this PhD research project are presented. The aim of the project was to gain insight into the implementation of volunteer brokerage by volunteer centres, and the way in which better results could be achieved. With regards to this aim, the following research questions and sub-questions were defined:

1. How is volunteer brokerage organized in the Netherlands and what part do volunteer centres play as volunteer brokers?
2. How can recognised success factors for volunteer brokerage be used in practice by volunteer centres?
   a. Which factors contribute to the success of volunteer brokerage?
   b. How does volunteer brokerage offered by volunteer centres occur in practice?
   c. When and how can success factors for matching volunteers and organizations be incorporated in the practice of volunteer brokerage offered by volunteer centres?
3. How can the usability of volunteer brokerage websites of volunteer centres be studied and what kind of information does this provide?
4. What developments have influenced the brokerage role of volunteering centres in the past 10 years and what does this mean for the future of volunteer centres as volunteer brokers?

Research questions 3 and 4 were added later due to increasing internet use and the duration of the research project.

Chapter 2 describes the results of a literature review into the organization of volunteer brokerage in the Netherlands and possible success factors for volunteer brokerage. The literature search has made it clear that two types of brokers are active in the volunteer market. These are internal and external brokers: brokers who may or may not have a relationship with the requesting or offering party. Volunteer centres are active as external brokers on both the supply and demand sides of the volunteer market, where they take on a central role on the supply side. Furthermore, factors have been identified that contribute to a positive outcome of volunteer brokerage. It turned out that the willingness of people to volunteer for an organization depends on the extent to which they expect, based on information about the organization, to be able to derive pride and respect from it. In the long term, feelings of pride and respect contribute to commitment to the organization and increase the chances that volunteers will continue to work for the organization. In addition, the satisfaction of volunteers increases as the work offered more closely matches their motives for volunteering. Thus also increasing the chance that people will continue to volunteer in the future.

Chapter 3 reports on the results of a field study, in which the implementation of volunteer brokerage by volunteer centres was examined. The field study was conducted in South Holland and included a survey of 38 volunteer centres (response 74%), semi-structured interviews with 8 representatives of volunteer centres, 9 volunteer organizations and 8 volunteers, and the subsequent examination of documents collected during the interviews. Analysis of the data collected showed that volunteer centres follow a similar procedure when mediating. Six phases can be distinguished here: orientation, registration, matching, reaction, introduction and feedback. Brokerage can take place offline, at the office of a volunteer centre, or online. At the time of the field research, full online brokerage was not yet possible. It was necessary to have personal contact with an employee of the volunteer centre at some point in the process. Based on the knowledge of the brokerage process, it was then possible to indicate how and when the success factors for volunteer brokerage, identified in Chapter 2, could be incorporated into the brokerage process. Providing information about volunteer organizations and collecting information about motives are important in order to be able to connect with feelings of pride and respect and the motives of volunteers, respectively. The Matching and Information phases proved to be best suited for this.

Chapter 4 explicitly discusses the use of motivation to improve the results of volunteer brokerage. In addition to new literature findings, reference is also made to the literature findings described in Chapter 2, the findings from the field study described in Chapter 3 and the findings from the usability study described in Chapter 4. The various results again

underline the importance of motivation in the choice of and satisfaction with volunteering. It also becomes clear that it is possible to link certain motives directly to specific sectors or types of activities. This makes it even easier to achieve good matches in volunteer brokerage. Standardized tests prove to be a good way to assess motivation in a reliable and valid way. However, according to the field study, tests are only occasionally used by volunteer centres, with little attention paid to motivation at all. One problem that specifically emerged from the usability study of websites was that the results of the tests were not linked to the online volunteer vacancies database. Users had to make their own interpretation in finding the relevant vacancies on offer.

Chapter 5 addresses a third success factor for volunteer brokerage: the usability of a website. This concept is further defined in the context of the increasing digitization of society. Next, a commonly used method to investigate the usability of a website is described. This concerns user tests. According to this method, users are asked to perform a series of representative tasks on a website without any help. User testing is then applied to study the usability of the volunteer brokerage websites of 5 volunteer centres. On the one hand, the tests provided information about the type of problems that users encounter when using the brokerage website of a volunteer centre. On the other hand, volunteer centres were offered a method to investigate the usability of their websites.

Chapter 6 examines the developments that have influenced the brokerage role of volunteer centres in the past ten years. This is done on the basis of a literature search and interviews with experts. Nine experts were interviewed, who were well informed about the volunteer market and volunteer brokerage by volunteer centres from different disciplines and organizations. The literature review showed that four important developments can be distinguished: the increasing digitization of society, the introduction of the Social Support Act in 2015, a changing volunteer market and the emergence of new brokerage initiatives. According to these experts, these developments have led the increasing importance of online brokerage. External platforms are being used more frequently, particularly the new broker NLforeachother [NLvoorelkaar]. Offline brokerage remains important for special groups and is more often carried out on an project basis. Volunteer centres are increasingly dealing with new groups of volunteers. These are both groups put forward by the municipalities and those that have been looked up by volunteer centres themselves. As far as the future is concerned, experts expect these changes to continue. In addition, they see potential changes at the volunteer centres towards scaling up, community-based working and profiling as local expertise centres. As a result, volunteer brokerage will take a less prominent place within volunteer centres.

Chapter 7 gives a summary of the research results and a reflection on them. Subsequently, the strengths and weaknesses of the research project are discussed and recommendations are made for the practice of volunteer brokerage and future research. A brief general conclusion concludes the chapter.

The research project has been carried out in three successive phases. Phase I research findings show that volunteer centres play a central role as brokers in the volunteer market. This is particularly significant to volunteer organizations in the care and welfare sector. Furthermore, it is shown how volunteer brokerage by volunteer centres is carried out in practice. It is possible to identify a process-related course here. The process has six phases that apply to both offline and online brokerage. A (more) successful outcome can be achieved by responding to the motivation and feelings of pride and respect of the volunteers. The process model shows when and how this can be achieved. With motivation this will be easier than with feelings of pride and respect. Feelings of pride and respect are about the image that volunteers have/get from a volunteer organization. This is (largely) determined by the volunteer organization itself and not by a volunteer centre. Specifically for motivation, reference is made to standardized tests to assess motivation. This shows a lot of room for improvement in both the offline and online services.

The research in Phase II shows that usability in online brokerage is an important factor for success. User tests can be administered to determine the usability of a brokerage website.

Phase III research indicates that new brokers have now entered the volunteer market. They complement and support volunteer brokerage offered by volunteer centres. Moreover, from a broader time perspective, the brokerage role of volunteer centres has changed - and still is changing. More project-based brokerage is taking place and online brokerage is being outsourced more often. In addition, volunteer centres are shifting to a focus on an expert consultancy role.

The research project uses various methods, all of which have specific advantages and disadvantages. These are discussed in detail in this chapter. Specifically for Phase I, the combined research design allowed the advantages of one method to be used to compensate for the disadvantages of another. This is called methodical triangulation.

A general shortcoming of the research project has to do with the long duration of the project. As a result, certain research findings from Phase I of the research project have become less current and may be outdated. However, the long duration has the advantage that it is possible to see how volunteer centres have developed as brokers over time. Moreover, new information related to volunteer motivation could be assessed.

A number of recommendations for practice and research are formulated at the end of the chapter. The first recommendation concerns the sharing and use of research information. The findings of this study and other relevant research findings should be shared with volunteer centres. This is possible through freely accessible publications and interest groups. Volunteer

centres must be prepared to take a critical look at their own practice on the basis of these findings and to implement the necessary changes or improvements. In this context, it is also recommended to have the usability of the brokerage websites regularly tested.

A more specific recommendation has to do with supporting volunteer coordinators. This group of brokers is dealing with an overload. Volunteer centres can provide relief here by taking over part of the workload.

Furthermore, more research is needed into the relationship between volunteers' motivations and specific volunteer activities and work sectors. It is important that the research findings are incorporated into standardized motivation tests with a link to the available vacancies. It is also interesting to investigate to what extent the practical model found persists in project-based brokerage, and the connection to the identified success factors. Research into the organizational structure and identity of volunteer centres is also desirable. Finally, it is recommended that current studies monitoring the developments in the volunteer market pay special attention to the possible decrease in voluntary action in favour of informal care and its causes.

SAMENVATTING

SAMENVATTING

Dit proefschrift brengt verslag uit over een onderzoeksproject naar de optimalisatie van vrijwilligersbemiddeling door steunpunten vrijwilligerswerk. Vrijwilligersbemiddeling staat voor het samenbrengen van vraag en aanbod in de vrijwilligersmarkt. Het onderzoeksproject vond plaats in de periode 2008-2019 in Zuid-Holland en bestond uit een aantal opeenvolgende deelonderzoeken die in drie fases zijn uitgevoerd.

In **hoofdstuk 1** wordt het onderzoeksonderwerp geïntroduceerd. Samengevat levert dit het volgende beeld op. De eerste steunpunten vrijwilligerswerk in Nederland zijn begin jaren zeventig opgericht op initiatief van de overheid. Diverse subsidieregelingen hebben een belangrijke impuls gegeven aan de verdere groei van het aantal steunpunten. Vanaf de start hebben steunpunten vrijwilligerswerk zich nadrukkelijk gericht op vrijwilligersbemiddeling. In de loop der jaren zijn hier diverse andere taken bijgekomen, echter vrijwilligersbemiddeling bleef voor veel steunpunten een belangrijke zo niet de belangrijkste taak. Als bemiddelaars vormen steunpunten vrijwilligerswerk een veelvuldig gebruikt wervingskanaal voor met name vrijwilligersorganisaties in de zorg- en welzijnssector. Deze organisaties kampen al sinds jaar en dag met tekorten aan vrijwilligers. De mate van succes van vrijwilligersbemiddeling is nog relatief beperkt. Optimalisatie van het proces kan mede bijdragen aan het oplossen van de vrijwilligerstekorten.

In vervolg op de algemene introductie worden de doelstelling en onderzoeksvragen die in dit onderzoeksproject centraal staan gepresenteerd. Het doel van het onderzoek was om inzicht te verkrijgen in de uitvoering van vrijwilligersbemiddeling door steunpunten vrijwilligerswerk en de manier waarop betere resultaten kunnen worden verkregen. Deze doelstelling is vertaald in de volgende onderzoeksvragen en subvragen.

1. Hoe is de vrijwilligersbemiddeling in Nederland georganiseerd en welke rol spelen steunpunten vrijwilligerswerk als makelaars vrijwilligersbemiddeling?
2. Hoe kunnen geïdentificeerde succesfactoren voor vrijwilligersbemiddeling in de praktijk worden gebruikt door steunpunten vrijwilligerswerk?
   a. Welke factoren dragen bij aan het succes van vrijwilligersbemiddeling?
   b. Hoe wordt vrijwilligersbemiddeling door steunpunten vrijwilligerswerk in de praktijk uitgevoerd?
   c. Wanneer en hoe kunnen succesfactoren voor het matchen van vrijwilligers en organisaties door steunpunten vrijwilligerswerk worden geïmplementeerd in de praktijk van vrijwilligersbemiddeling?
3. Hoe kan de gebruiksvriendelijkheid (usability) van vrijwilligersbemiddelingswebsites van steunpunten vrijwilligerswerk worden onderzocht en wat voor informatie levert dit op?

4. Welke ontwikkelingen hebben de bemiddelingsrol van steunpunten vrijwilligerswerk gedurende de afgelopen 10 jaar beïnvloed en wat betekent dit voor de toekomst van steunpunten vrijwilligerswerk als bemiddelaars?

De onderzoeksvragen 3 en 4 zijn later toegevoegd vanwege het toenemende internetgebruik en de lange duur van het onderzoeksproject.

In **hoofdstuk 2** worden de resultaten beschreven van een literatuurstudie naar de organisatie van vrijwilligersbemiddeling in Nederland en mogelijke succesfactoren voor vrijwilligersbemiddeling. De literatuurstudie heeft duidelijk gemaakt dat er twee types bemiddelaars actief zijn op de vrijwilligersmarkt. Dit zijn interne en externe bemiddelaars, bemiddelaars die wel of geen relatie hebben met de vragende of aanbiedende partij. Steunpunten vrijwilligerswerk zijn als externe makelaars zowel aan de vraag- als aanbodzijde van de vrijwilligersmarkt actief. Aan de aanbodzijde vervullen zij een centrale rol. Verder zijn factoren geïdentificeerd, die bijdragen aan een positieve uitkomst van vrijwilligersbemiddeling. Gebleken is dat de bereidheid van mensen om vrijwillig te gaan werken voor een organisatie samenhangt met de mate waarin zij, op basis van informatie over de organisatie, verwachten hier trots en respect aan te kunnen ontlenen. Op langere termijn dragen gevoelens van trots en respect bij aan de betrokkenheid bij de organisatie en vergroten zij de kans dat vrijwilligers voor de organisatie willen blijven werken. Daarnaast neemt de tevredenheid van vrijwilligers toe naarmate de aangeboden werkzaamheden beter aansluiten op hun motieven om vrijwilligerswerk te doen. Tevens wordt zo de kans vergroot dat zij zich ook in de toekomst vrijwillig willen blijven inzetten.

In **hoofdstuk 3** wordt verslag gedaan van de resultaten van een veldonderzoek, waarin de uitvoering van vrijwilligersbemiddeling door steunpunten vrijwilligerswerk is onderzocht. Het veldonderzoek is uitgevoerd in Zuid-Holland en omvatte een enquête onder 38 steunpunten vrijwilligerswerk (respons 74%), semigestructureerde interviews met 8 vertegenwoordigers van steunpunten vrijwilligerswerk, 9 vrijwilligersorganisaties en 8 vrijwilligers en onderzoek van tijdens de interviews verzamelde documenten. Analyse van de verzamelde gegevens toonde aan dat steunpunten vrijwilligerswerk een vergelijkbare procedure volgen bij het bemiddelen. Hierin kunnen zes fases worden onderscheiden: oriëntatie, aanmelding, afstemming, reactie, kennismaking en terugkoppeling. Bemiddeling kan zowel offline, op het kantoor van een steunpunt vrijwilligerswerk, of online gebeuren. Ten tijde van het veldonderzoek was volledige online bemiddeling nog niet mogelijk. Op enig moment in het proces was persoonlijk contact met een medewerker van het steunpunt noodzakelijk.
Op basis van de kennis over het bemiddelingsproces kon vervolgens worden aangegeven hoe en wanneer de in hoofdstuk 2 geïdentificeerde succesfactoren voor vrijwilligersbemiddeling konden worden ingepast in het bemiddelingsproces. Informatieverstrekking over vrijwilligersorganisaties en informatieverzameling over motieven zijn van belang om

respectievelijk te kunnen aansluiten op gevoelens van trots en respect en de motieven van vrijwilligers. De afstemmingsfase en kennismakingsfase bleken zich hier het beste voor te lenen.

In **hoofdstuk 4** wordt expliciet ingegaan op het gebruik van motivatie ter verbetering van de resultaten van vrijwilligersbemiddeling. Naast nieuwe literatuurbevindingen wordt hierbij teruggegrepen op de in hoofdstuk 2 beschreven literatuurbevindingen, de in hoofdstuk 3 beschreven bevindingen uit het veldonderzoek en de in hoofdstuk 4 beschreven bevindingen uit het gebruiksvriendelijkheidsonderzoek. De diverse literatuurbevindingen onderstrepen (nogmaals) het belang van motivatie bij de keuze van vrijwilligerswerk. Tevens wordt duidelijk dat het mogelijk is om bepaalde motieven direct te koppelen aan bepaalde sectoren of type werkzaamheden. Dit maakt het nog beter mogelijk om goede matches te realiseren bij vrijwilligersbemiddeling.
Gestandaardiseerde testen blijken het meest geschikt te zijn om motivatie op een betrouwbare en valide manier te beoordelen. Echter, volgens het veldonderzoek worden testen slechts incidenteel ingezet door steunpunten vrijwilligerswerk. Er is überhaupt weinig aandacht voor motivatie. Een probleem dat specifiek naar voren kwam uit het gebruiksvriendelijkheidsonderzoek van websites was dat de resultaten van de testen niet waren gekoppeld aan de online vacaturebank. Gebruikers moesten zelf de vertaalslag maken naar de aangeboden vacatures.

In **hoofdstuk 5** komt een derde succesfactor voor vrijwilligersbemiddeling aan de orde: de gebruiksvriendelijkheid (usability) van een website. Het begrip wordt nader gedefinieerd in de context van de toenemende digitalisering van de maatschappij. Hierna wordt een veel gebruikte methode beschreven voor het onderzoeken van de gebruiksvriendelijkheid van een website. Dit betreft gebruikerstesten (user tests). Bij deze methode wordt gebruikers gevraagd om zonder hulp een reeks representatieve taken op een website uit te voeren. Gebruikerstesten zijn vervolgens toegepast om de gebruiksvriendelijkheid van de bemiddelingswebsites van 5 steunpunten vrijwilligerswerk te bestuderen. De testen leverden enerzijds informatie op over het soort problemen dat gebruikers tegenkomen bij het gebruik van de bemiddelingswebsite van een steunpunt vrijwilligerswerk. Anderzijds werd steunpunten vrijwilligerswerk een methode geboden om de gebruiksvriendelijkheid van hun websites te onderzoeken.

In **hoofdstuk 6** wordt bekeken welke ontwikkelingen de laatste tien jaren van invloed zijn geweest op de bemiddelingsrol van steunpunten vrijwilligerswerk en wat dit betekent voor de toekomst. Dit gebeurt op basis van literatuuronderzoek en interviews met experts. Gesproken is met 9 experts, die vanuit verschillende vakgebieden en organisaties goed geïnformeerd zijn over de vrijwilligersmarkt en vrijwilligersbemiddeling door steunpunten vrijwilligerswerk. Uit het literatuuronderzoek kwam naar voren dat er vier belangrijke ontwikkelingen kunnen

worden onderscheiden, te weten: toenemende digitalisering van de maatschappij, invoering van de Wmo 2015, een veranderende vrijwilligersmarkt en de opkomst van nieuwe online bemiddelingsinitiatieven. Volgens experts hebben deze ontwikkelingen ertoe geleid dat online bemiddeling sterk aan belang heeft gewonnen. Hierbij wordt meer en meer gebruik gemaakt van externe platforms van met name de nieuwe bemiddelaar NLvoorelkaar. Offline bemiddeling blijft belangrijk voor speciale groepen en wordt vaker projectmatig ingevuld. Steunpunten vrijwilligerswerk krijgen steeds meer te maken met nieuwe groepen vrijwilligers. Dit betreft enerzijds groepen die door de gemeenten worden aangedragen, anderzijds zijn het groepen die door steunpunten vrijwilligerswerk zelf worden opgezocht. Voor wat betreft de toekomst verwachten experts dat deze veranderingen verder zullen doorzetten. Verder zien zij bij steunpunten vrijwilligerswerk veranderingen richting schaalvergroting, samenlevingsgericht werken en profilering als lokale expertise centra. Als gevolg hiervan zal vrijwilligersbemiddeling een minder prominentere plaats gaan innemen bij steunpunten vrijwilligerswerk.

In **hoofdstuk 7** wordt een samenvatting van de onderzoeksresultaten gegeven en een reflectie daarop. Vervolgens wordt stilgestaan bij de sterke en zwakke punten van het onderzoeksproject en worden aanbevelingen gedaan voor de praktijk van vrijwilligersbemiddeling en toekomstig onderzoek.
Het onderzoeksproject is uitgevoerd in drie opeenvolgende fasen. Uit de onderzoeksbevindingen van fase I blijkt dat steunpunten vrijwilligerswerk een centrale rol spelen als bemiddelaars op de vrijwilligersmarkt. Zij betekenen met name veel voor vrijwilligersorganisaties in de zorg- en welzijnssector. Verder laten de fase I onderzoeksbevindingen zien hoe vrijwilligersbemiddeling door steunpunten vrijwilligerswerk in de praktijk wordt uitgevoerd. Het is mogelijk om hier een procesmatig verloop in te onderkennen. Het proces kent zes fasen die zowel voor offline als online bemiddeling opgaan. Een succesvolle(re) uitkomst kan worden bewerkstelligd door in te spelen op de motivatie en gevoelens van trots en respect van vrijwilligers. Op basis van het procesmodel wordt aangegeven in welke fases en op welke manier dit kan worden gerealiseerd. Bij motivatie zal dit eenvoudiger gaan dan bij gevoelens van trots en respect. Bij gevoelens van trots en respect gaat het namelijk om het beeld dat vrijwilligers hebben/krijgen van een vrijwilligersorganisatie. Dit wordt (groten) deels bepaald door de vrijwilligersorganisatie en niet door een steunpunt vrijwilligerswerk. Specifiek voor motivatie wordt gerefereerd aan gestandaardiseerde testen om motivatie te meten. Hier blijkt veel ruimte voor verbetering zowel offline als online.
Het onderzoek in fase II toont aan dat gebruiksvriendelijkheid bij online bemiddeling een belangrijk factor voor succes. Door middel van gebruikerstests kan de gebruiksvriendelijkheid van een bemiddelingswebsite worden vastgesteld.
Het fase III onderzoek geeft aan dat inmiddels nieuwe bemiddelaars hun intrede op de vrijwilligersmarkt hebben gedaan. Zij complementeren en ondersteunen de door steunpunten

vrijwilligerswerk geboden vrijwilligersbemiddeling. Tevens kan in een breder tijdsperspectief worden gezien dat de bemiddelingsrol van steunpunten vrijwilligerswerk aan het veranderen is. Er wordt meer projectmatige bemiddeld en online bemiddeling wordt vaker uitbesteed. Verder komt er bij steunpunten vrijwilligerswerk meer nadruk te liggen op de expertrol.

In het onderzoeksproject zijn diverse onderzoeksmethoden gebruikt die allemaal specifieke voor- en nadelen kennen. Deze worden uitgebreid besproken in dit hoofdstuk. Specifiek voor fase I geldt dat door de gecombineerde onderzoeksopzet de voordelen van één methode konden worden ingezet om de nadelen van een andere methode te compenseren. Dit wordt methodische triangulatie genoemd.
Een algemene tekortkoming van het onderzoeksproject heeft te maken met de lange duur van het onderzoeksproject. Hierdoor zijn bepaalde onderzoeksbevindingen uit fase I van het onderzoekproject minder actueel geworden en mogelijk ingehaald door de tijd. De lange tijdsduur heeft echter als voordeel dat het mogelijk is om te zien hoe steunpunten vrijwilligerswerk zich in de loop der jaren hebben ontwikkeld als bemiddelaars. Ook kon nieuwe informatie met betrekking tot de motivatie van vrijwilligers worden toegevoegd.

Tot slot van het hoofdstuk wordt een aantal aanbevelingen voor praktijk en onderzoek geformuleerd. De eerste aanbevelingen betreffen het delen en gebruiken van onderzoeksinformatie. De bevindingen van dit onderzoek en andere relevante onderzoeksbevindingen dienen te worden gedeeld met steunpunten vrijwilligerswerk. Via vrij toegankelijke publicaties en belangenorganisaties is dit mogelijk. Steunpunten vrijwilligerswerk moeten bereid zijn om op basis van deze bevindingen kritisch te kijken naar de eigen uitvoeringspraktijk en benodigde veranderingen c.q. verbeteringen door te voeren. In dit verband wordt ook het regelmatig (laten) testen van de gebruiksvriendelijkheid van de bemiddelingswebsites aanbevolen.
Een meer specifieke aanbeveling heeft te maken met het ondersteunen van vrijwilligerscoördinatoren. Deze groep bemiddelaars heeft te maken met overbelasting. Steunpunten vrijwilligerswerk kunnen hier verlichting bieden door een deel van de takenlast over te nemen.
Verder is er meer onderzoek nodig naar de relatie tussen de motivatie van vrijwilligers en specifieke vrijwillige werkzaamheden en werksectoren. Belangrijk is dat de onderzoeksbevindingen worden verwerkt in gestandaardiseerde motivatietests met een koppeling naar het beschikbare vacaturebestand. Verder is het interessant om te onderzoeken in hoeverre het gevonden praktijkmodel stand houdt bij projectmatige bemiddeling en daar ruimte is om aan te sluiten op de geïdentificeerde succesfactoren. Ook is onderzoek gewenst naar de organisatiestructuur en identiteit van steunpunten vrijwilligerswerk. Tenslotte wordt aanbevolen om in de huidige monitoringsonderzoeken naar ontwikkelingen op de

vrijwilligersmarkt bijzondere aandacht te besteden aan de mogelijke afname van vrijwillige inzet ten gunste van informele zorg en de oorzaken daarvoor.

DANKWOORD

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Trots ben ik dat het is gelukt om mijn promotieproject na 12 jaar af te ronden met dit proefschrift. In deze jaren is veel gebeurd, met name ook op het persoonlijke vlak. Hierdoor was het nodig om het project tussentijds soms even op een laag pitje te zetten. Echter met de hulp van de mensen om mij heen vond ik toch steeds de moed en inspiratie om het project weer op te pakken en door te gaan. Deze mensen wil ik graag bedanken.

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Els van Gilst
Tilburg, 11 december 2020

CURRICULUM VITAE

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Els van Gilst was born on April 2nd, 1957 in Wassenaar, the Netherlands. In 1975, she obtained her Gymnasium β diploma at the Adelbert College in Wassenaar.
From 1975 to 1984 she studied Clinical Psychology at Leiden University. During the last two years of this degree, she worked as a student assistant. After her studies, she was co-researcher in a study into the aftermath of suicide at Leiden University.
From 1988 to 1997 she worked as a qualitative researcher at the Municipal Health Service for the Rotterdam area. She mainly conducted research there for the benefit of the Rotterdam Epidemiological Neighborhood Characteristics System (REBUS). Due to personal circumstances, she had to quit this job.
From 2000 to 2016 (with an interruption of more than three years), she was a board member of the Volunteer Centre Wassenaar (VCW). In this period, she started her PhD project at Tranzo in 2008 as an external PhD candidate.
In 2015 she worked for six months as a researcher at Tranzo, where she was involved in research for her own PhD project.
Els is married to Richard Deighton and they have two daughters, Lisa and Tessa.